NEWS / A5

15 Negros farmers on hunger strike taken to hospital

WORLD / A24

Florida appeals court stops Nicole Smith's burial in Bahamas

NEWS/ A2

Release pretrial report on alleged coup, AFP ordered

NEWS / A2

Gov't supports 'komiks' revival by NCCA, Caparas taps Asean writers, DepEd

HK man, 107, reveals longevity secret: No sex

MALULUGI VIAGRA N'YAN!

HONG KONG—A 107-year-old Hong Kong villager, who still enjoys an occasional smoke, has attributed his longevity in part to decades of sexual abstinence, a newspaper said on Sunday.

HK MAN/ A10

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Wednesday, February 28, 2007 ★★ 5 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 82 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

GMA backs Congress team's last plea to CGFNS

By Juliet Labog-Javellana
and Christian V. Esguerra

NEVER SAY DIE.

Despite a clear refusal by the US-based Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS) to accept Filipino nurses who passed the leak-tainted June 2006 nursing examination, President Macapagal-Arroyo yester-

GMA BACKS/ A10

James benched; Kris goes home to mom

By Juliet Labog-Javellana
and Bayani San Diego

BASKETBALL STAR JAMES YAP HAS BEEN benched. Celebrity wife Kris Aquino packed up and went home to mommy Cory, while her elder brother Noynoy dropped Yap from his campaign sorties after his alleged affair with a beauty clinic receptionist hit the fan.

"I told him I need space," said Kris in an interview with ABS-CBN yesterday. She told reporters she had asked Yap to leave but he insisted he was innocent.

At the same time, the campaign manager of Tarlac Rep. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III, Florencio Abad, announced that the Aquino family had decided it would be best to cancel the plan to send Kris' husband on the campaign trail with Noynoy until the problem of his rumored dalliance with a girl named Hope had been resolved.

The girl, Hope Centeno, faced TV cameras last Sunday and claimed she had a 10-month

JAMES/ A15

Power rates ordered cut

Opposition welcomes reduction but suspects electioneering

By Ronnel W. Domingo

CONSUMERS REELING from one of the highest power rates in East Asia will enjoy a small rate reduction starting next month, or right in the middle of the election campaign for senatorial aspirants.

The Energy Regulatory Commission announced yesterday that it had ordered the state-owned National Power Corp. to reduce its rates by as much as 31.5 centavos per kilowatt-hour in the Visayas largely because of declining generation cost.

Consumers in Luzon will enjoy a rate reduction of 4.3 centavos per kWh while those in Mindanao, 0.45 centavo per kWh.

Manila Electric Co., a power distributor that gets part of its supply from Napocor, said the 4.3-centavo reduction would mean a decrease of P4.30 in the monthly bill of a household consuming 100 kWh.

The rate reduction reflects changes in the generation costs of Napocor between November 2005 and January 2006, and does not take into account the recent strengthening of the peso against

POWER/ A15

LYN RILLON

"I WON'T answer political questions, OK?" President Arroyo tells the media during her regular roundtable discussion on Tuesday at the Palace, where she focuses on the strong performance of the national government and improvement on the operational efficiencies of government corporations.

US ready to help solve political killings

IF ASKED, THE UNITED STATES IS PREPARED to help President Macapagal-Arroyo's administration solve the political killings in the Philippines.

"We'll certainly be delighted to do more, [although] the sovereign nation of the Philippines needs to let us know how we can help," US Ambassador Kristie Kenney yesterday told reporters at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City, where she attended the ongoing Balikatan 2007 staff exercise on maritime security.

Kenney said the Philippine government had come up with "quite a serious action plan" to address the unabated killings of journalists and leftist activists, and mentioned as an example the human rights office put up by the military.

"I think that is very important. The key now is to follow up, to investigate, to fortify the institutions that investigate, to hold people responsible," she said.

Kenney conceded that it would be hard to investigate each one of the killings and find the guilty.

She declined to comment on the initial findings announced last week by United Na-

US READY/ A6

Erap writes 'ASO Jingle' for 3 ex-allies

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

DEPOSED PRESIDENT JOSEPH Estrada is making known his displeasure with three former political allies who joined the administration's senatorial ticket by composing a jingle sung to the tune of the '50s classic, "How much is that doggie in the window?"

Estrada's composition, titled "ASO Jingle," is aimed at reelectionist Sen. Edgardo Angara and former Senators Tito Sotto and Tessie Aquino-Oreta, said a source close to the detained leader but who did not want to be named as he was not authorized to speak on the matter.

The jingle, which calls the three former allies "paid turncoats," has become one of the campaign songs of the Genuine Opposition senatorial slate.

It was recorded only the morning before the GO proclamation rally on Feb. 24 at Plaza Miranda in Manila, where it was repeatedly played before the program proper.

"It was a rush job. He wanted it to be played here," the same

ERAP WRITES/ A15

DSWD on Bicol relief: Where are the tents?

By Volt Contreras

BOTHERED BY THE CONTINUING congestion at the evacuation centers for survivors of Supertyphoon "Reming," Social Welfare Secretary Esperanza Cabral has ordered a check on whether all the family tents donated by local and foreign donors have reached their intended beneficiaries in the Bicol region.

Citing records of the Department of Social Welfare and Development, Cabral yesterday said the agency had delivered a total of 1,887 tents to Region V. The last batch of 500 was sent only three weeks ago to the remaining evacuation centers in Albay, she said.

But as she personally saw during her last visit to the centers early this month, Cabral said, the so-called tent cities were still "congested" despite the steady reduction in the number of evacuees since Reming battered Bicolandia on Nov. 30 last year.

"A tent that is good for just one family (or an average of six people) is being occupied by up to three families, which is unacceptable to me," Cabral told the INQUIRER when asked what had prompted her to order a recount of the tents.

"We are now verifying: Where are the

DSWD/ A6

SMALL VICTORY: Brig. Gen. Danny Lim under heavy guard after court-martial hearing at Camp Capinpin in Tanay, Rizal. The trial had been snagged by the demand of Lim and the 27 others accused of mutiny to see a copy of the pretrial investigation report. *(Story on Page A2.)*

PHOTOS BY JOAN BONDOC

SEEING DOUBLE IN TROUBLE: Dancel Langkit (right), a civilian government employee, provides moral support to his identical twin brother, Scout Ranger Capt. Dante Langkit.

Youth leader to leave RP if 7 things happen

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

THE STATE OF POLITICS IN THE Philippines is becoming so bad that even the most patriotic of Filipinos like Harvey Keh is considering migrating.

If that happens, it will certainly be a big loss.

The credentials as patriot of the 27-year-old Keh are impeccable.

In an open letter posted on the Internet, Keh said that in spite of his love for his country, there were seven possible outcomes of the coming elections that would make him consider leaving the country.

1. If former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano of "Hello Garci" infamy wins in his announced bid to become congressman of Bukidnon.

The opposition says a wiretapped conversation purportedly between Garcillano and President Macapagal-Arroyo is evidence Ms Arroyo stole the 2004 presidential election. Ms Arroyo has denied any wrongdoing.

"We would really be the laughingstock of the whole world if we allowed a man with the reputation of Garci to be one of

YOUTH/ A6

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2007

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Mindanao will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	**Iloilo/Bacolod**	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	**Roxas**	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	**Cebu**	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	**Tacloban**	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	**Gen. Santos**	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	**Zamboanga**	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	**Cagayan de Oro**	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	**Davao**	Cloudy with Rains

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Pinay 'yaya' honored for heroism in US

By Cynthia D. Balana

FOR SAVING THEIR FOUR CHILDREN AND their two friends from their burning house in Stowe, Vermont, recently, the grateful employers of a 30-year-old Filipino nanny gifted her with $25,000, the Department of Foreign Affairs reported yesterday.

The Philippine consulate in Vermont learned about Negros-born Hazel Reposo's heroism when her employers and their children accompanied her to get a new Philippine passport after she lost the old one in the fire.

Reposo narrated how one of the children told her about the flames coming out of the garage of the 4,500-square-foot luxury home that was made of wood.

"The fire alarm went off and I immediately ordered the children to abandon the house. I called up 911 on my mobile phone and then my employers," Reposo said.

The DFA said homeowner Daniel Wood and his wife praised Reposo for her "heroism and quick thinking," adding that they will forever be grateful to her.

"The $25,000 was not a reward but was meant for the education of Hazel's son. She took care of our most precious possessions—our children," the consulate quoted the Wood couple as saying.

Consul General Cecilia Rebong said Reposo had worked as a nanny since November 2003 even though she was a business management graduate of the University of Negros Occidental-Recoletos.

Release pre-trial report, court-martial orders AFP

By Christine O. Avendaño

CAMP CAPINPIN, TANAY, RIZAL—THE MILITARY TRIBUNAL trying the case of 38 renegade military officers implicated in last year's alleged coup attempt yesterday ordered the release of the much-sought pre-trial report which the military had kept secret for months reportedly because it recommended the dismissal of charges against all but 18 officers.

Southern Luzon Command chief Lt. Col. Alexander Yano, who heads the military tribunal, ordered the Judge Advocate General's Office (Jago) to furnish the pre-trial report to the accused 25 Scout Rangers and 13 Marine officers "in the interest of justice."

The accused officers, he said, have 15 days to file a motion for reconsideration before the tribunal.

Yano made the decision after conferring with the panel members for an hour following heated debates between the defense and prosecution lawyers on the legality of the court-martial panel and the release of the pre-trial report.

Illegal panel

The lawyers led by former Solicitor General Francisco Chavez, who is representing former Marine Commandant Maj. Gen. Renato Miranda, argued that the court-martial panel was illegally constituted because it was convened by Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. whom they said would be the "accuser, witness and eventually reviewer of the decision of the court-martial panel."

But Yano insisted that his court was a legally-constituted one, contrary to the contention of the accused' lawyers.

"Unless there is an order from the Court of Appeals or the Supreme Court prohibiting it to perform, this court will proceed," he said, as he adjourned the hearing.

Chavez had also sought the release of the pre-trial report which was issued by Lt. Col. Al Perreras, deputy chief judge advocate, last Oct. 25, 2006.

The lawyers said the accused officers had the right to get the pre-trial report so they could file a motion for reconsideration.

No report, no jurisdiction

Homobono Adaza, one of the lawyers for Marine Col. Ariel Querubin, also said that the court-martial cannot assume jurisdiction without the pre-trial report.

Yano's order to release the pre-trial report was received with elation by the 38 officers and their lawyers. Copies of the pre-trial report are expected to be available by Friday.

"That (release of the report) will be the basis for our defense," Gen. Miranda told reporters as he left with his other co-accused under heavy guard.

Saying they were still thankful for the release of the report, Chavez said the reason why they were insisting for it was because "we know that the report is in favor of the accused."

"That's (release of the pre-trial report) good news for us," Lt. Col. Achilles Segumalian told reporters.

Chavez also said that Esperon had no authority to reverse the findings of the pre-trial investigation conducted by Perreras.

After Perreras submitted his report to Esperon in October last year, the AFP chief of staff reportedly sought a "pre-trial advice" from Jago which recommended the convening of court-martial proceedings for some of the officers.

No authority

"Esperon has no authority to reverse the findings and conclusion of the investigating panel and that is why one of our moves today was to request the panel to issue a compulsory process, a subpoena for the general to appear before this panel because we are going to ask him so many questions regarding the preliminary investigation report," Chavez said.

Chavez said the lawyers for all of the accused have decided to file a motion for reconsideration and would ask the panel to "reconsider its statement that it is duly constituted."

The decision to release the report came after two hours of the third hearing of the court-martial proceedings against the 38 officers who are now detained here on Esperon's orders.

Larong Pambata, Noon at Ngayon.

Congratulations to the Winners of the PLDT-DPC 21st Visual Art National Competition!

2nd Prize
REYNAN S. SANCHEZ
University of the East
"Maligayang Pagbabago sa Makulay na Mundo ng Batang Pilipino"
Mixed Media, 29" x 29"

3rd Prize
RANDY E. CONSTANTINO
Far Eastern University
"Larong Pambata Noon Hanggang Ngayon"
Mixed Media, 29" x 29"

4th Prize
REDENTOR L. CASTILLO, JR.
University of Northern Philippines
"Mga Lumang Laro ng Makabagong Henerasyon"
Mixed Media, 29" x 29"

5th Prize
RANDALF C. DILLA
FEATI University
"Childhood Memories"
Mixed Media, 29" x 29"

1st Honorable Mention
JONATHAN N. SALVATIERRA
University of the East
"Buhayin ang Laro Noon, Kulayan ang Laro Ngayon, Payamanin ang Bukas ng Kulturang Pinoy"
Acrylic/Mixed Media on Canvas & Board, 29" x 29"

2nd Honorable Mention
CLARENCE A. CANTIVEROS
Technological University of the Philippines "Luksong Baka"
Acrylic on Canvas, 29" x 29"

3rd Honorable Mention
JOEL RAY F. PELLERIN
University of the Philippines Visayas – Cebu "Mundo ng Kamusmosan, Alaala ng Kasiyahan" Mixed Media, 29" x 29"

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Gov't to tap Asean writers in 'komiks' revival

THE GOVERNMENT PLANS TO INVOLVE NOT just local writers and artists but also their counterparts in nine other Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) member-countries in the revival of the dying "komiks" industry.

Cecile Guidote-Alvarez, the presidential adviser on culture and the arts, said she was thinking of "each Asean country contributing at least 10 folk tales in one big komiks project."

"Such an anthology would be one of the best ways for Filipino and other Asean children to learn about the entire region and to connect with this one caring and sharing community concept that is being promoted here," Alvarez said in an interview.

Aside from the Philippines, Asean also groups Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Burma.

Alvarez, who is also executive director of the National Commission on Culture and the Arts (NCCA), said the efforts to revive the komiks industry has the full backing of the administration.

The government will not allow the komiks industry to die, she said.

"Because if we do, it will be tragic. And this is what's going to happen if there's no appreciation of the role that komiks plays in Filipino society as well as local tradition and heritage," she said.

The First National Komiks Congress opened yesterday at the NCCA headquarters in Intramuros.

"The renaissance of Pinoy komiks is well on its way," said Alvarez who led the opening rites along with komiks king Carlo J. Caparas, Commission for the Filipino Language chair Ricardo Ma. Nolasco and supporters of the komiks revival program like PCSO Director Manuel Morato and former education secretary Alejandro Roces.

Caparas, who has written more than 800 komiks novels, has offered scholarships and financial incentives to budding writers and cartoonists from all over the country. *Jerry E. Esplanada*

4 rob suspects slain

By Marlon Ramos
Inquirer Southern Luzon

CAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA—POLICE killed four suspected bank robbers in a shootout yesterday in Imus, Cavite.

Three of the slain suspects had been identified: Marlon Barcelo of Dasmariñas, Cavite, Joel and Ronald Malvar, both of Bacoor, Cavite.

Senior Supt. Fidel Posadas, Cavite police director, said the gunmen were members of the Ampang Robbery Group that targets financial establishments in Cavite and other provinces in the Calabarzon area.

The group has been responsible for the string of highway robberies in the province, according to Posadas.

The suspects refused to stop their red van at a police roadblock on Molino Road, Barangay Anabu 2 in Imus and fired at officers who chased them, said regional police chief Nicasio Radovan.

After a 20-minute gun battle, all four suspects were killed while two alleged members of the gang escaped.

No officer was hurt. *With a report from AP*

Nothing unusual about Metro rains

THE SUDDEN DOWNPOUR THAT BROUGHT a refreshing relief to the increasingly warm temperature in Metro Manila for the past two days was a "normal phenomenon," weather bureau officials said yesterday.

The rainshowers had been induced by the tailend of the northeast monsoon affecting southern Luzon and Visayas, Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) officials said.

The northeast monsoon, or the cold front that brought chilly mornings for weeks, interacted with the easterly wind that picked up warm moisture from the Pacific Ocean and Philippine Sea, producing the rains, Pagasa weather services chief Nathaniel Cruz said.

"That's normal. That happens," he said in an interview, stressing that the downpour was not an indication of the early onset of the rainy season. "The dry season will push through."

Pagasa said that southern Luzon and Visayas would experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers while Mindanao would come under cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms.

The rest of Luzon would be partly cloudy or at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms, it added.

After the rains, the weather would revert to warm and hot temperatures, with the northeast monsoon predicted to end in the first week of March, paving the way for the dry season, the country's equivalent of summer, Cruz said.

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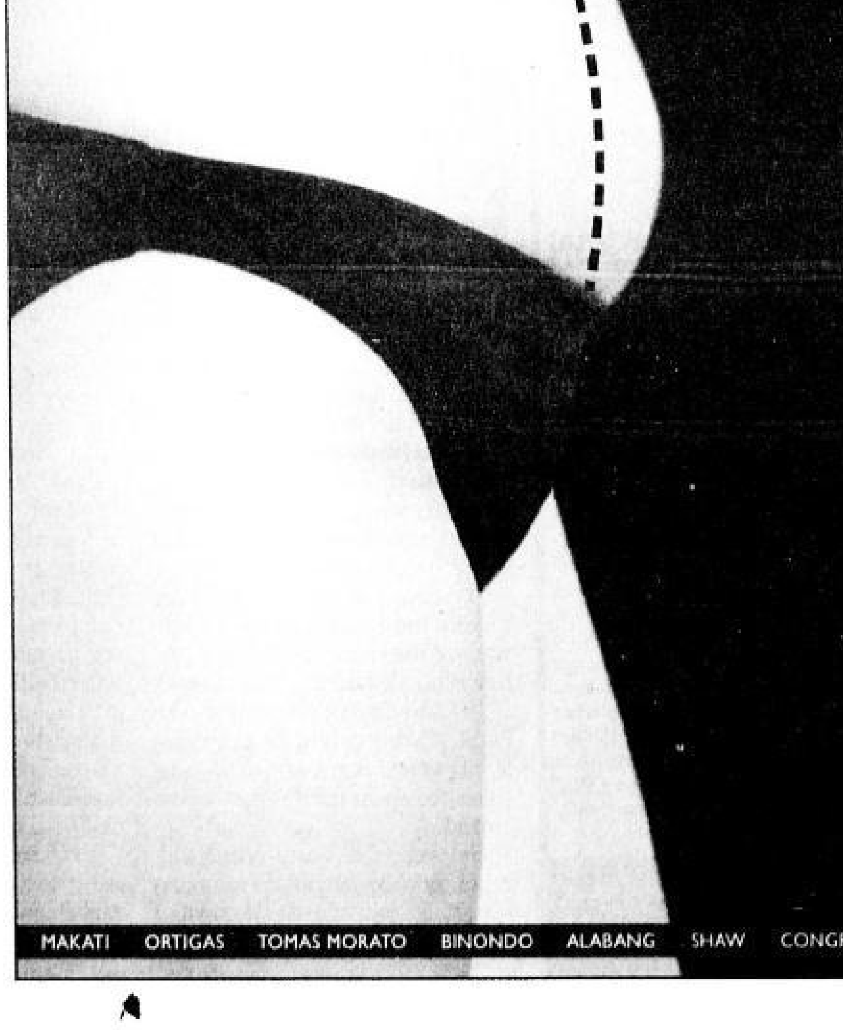
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Pacman ads banned only in GenSan, says lawyer

ELECTION LAWYER ROMULO MACALintal yesterday said the airing of advertisements that feature boxing champion Manny Pacquiao should be banned only in General Santos City, where Pacquiao is reportedly running for a seat in the House of Representatives.

"If Pacquiao ever runs for Congress, endorsement ads featuring him should not be banned nationwide since he's not running for senator like [actor] Cesar Montano," Macalintal said.

Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. earlier said the would be no problem with the television broadcast of Pacquiao's April 14 fight against Mexican boxer Jorge Solis since the bout is "a current event of national interest."

He said the Commission on Elections would prevent only the airing of Pacquiao's television and radio commercials that are not connected to the fight. *Jerome Aning*

Govs, mayors funding Team Unity

By Gil C. Cabacungan, Jr.

GOVERNORS AND MAYORS will use their own funds to shoulder the cost of Team Unity's main campaign vehicle, Pulong Sulong, with not a centavo to be counted on each candidate's P120 million spending limit.

Team Unity campaign manager Reli German yesterday said the governors and mayors would not use public funds for these political meetings to be attended by town leaders.

"It's all legal. The mayors and governors will spend their own money," said German amid complaints from the opposition that Team Unity was unfairly tapping government resources for partisan activities.

Wise use of funds

But Genuine Opposition senatorial bet Panfilo Lacson warned the administration against heavy election spending. "The inflationary effect of excessive government spending whether from the national or local coffers is at the least worrisome. The direct consequences of inflation could be devastating to the economy and yet the administration candidates have no qualms about bragging and displaying their extravagant style of campaigning," said Lacson.

Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr. urged the government to be more transparent on election-related items. "Malacañang should make a stand on the wise use of funds. Remember the fertilizer fund was released on Feb. 11, 2004, just before the presidential campaign. It's Feb. 26 and it's campaign time again," said Magsaysay said.

Transparency

He said the Department of Budget and Management should show the public how its funds were being disposed.

But senatorial candidate Michael Defensor shrugged off the impact of campaign spending on the government.

He said they expected the allied governors and mayors, who represented 95 percent of all incumbent local government officials, would be generous enough to help their candidacy in their districts. "This is the administration at work.

German explained that the 12 Team Unity candidates would not be spending any of their money for the Pulong Sulong as the party would foot all their travel, lodging and meal expenses during these high-tech sorties in lieu of song-and-dance rallies.

Major factor

With 40 million voters, each senatorial candidate is limited to spend P3 per voter or a maximum of P120 million for the campaign. Since the administration would foot the logistics bill in the national campaign, Team Unity candidates are able to maximize their spending on television, radio and print ads that have a far wider reach than political rallies.

Team Unity candidate Prospero Pichay said the Pulong Sulong concept—where only one candidate meets local leaders while pitching for the 11 other candidates in a pre-set video program shown on a portable screen—was a major factor in cutting the costs. "We can only cover so much if we go nationwide but this way we can cover a lot of ground in a limited time."

Much easier

Senatorial candidate Vicente "Tito" Sotto III said that campaigning was much easier compared to his previous election experience because of access to media, particularly television which reaches a broad swath of voters compared to political rallies.

Sotto said that during the 2004 campaign of losing presidential bet Fernando Poe Jr., they were only averaging 5,000 attendees per rally. Even if a candidate holds rallies twice a day for the entire 90-day campaign period, Sotto said only a maximum 900,000 people or just a fraction of the 40 million voters would be reached.

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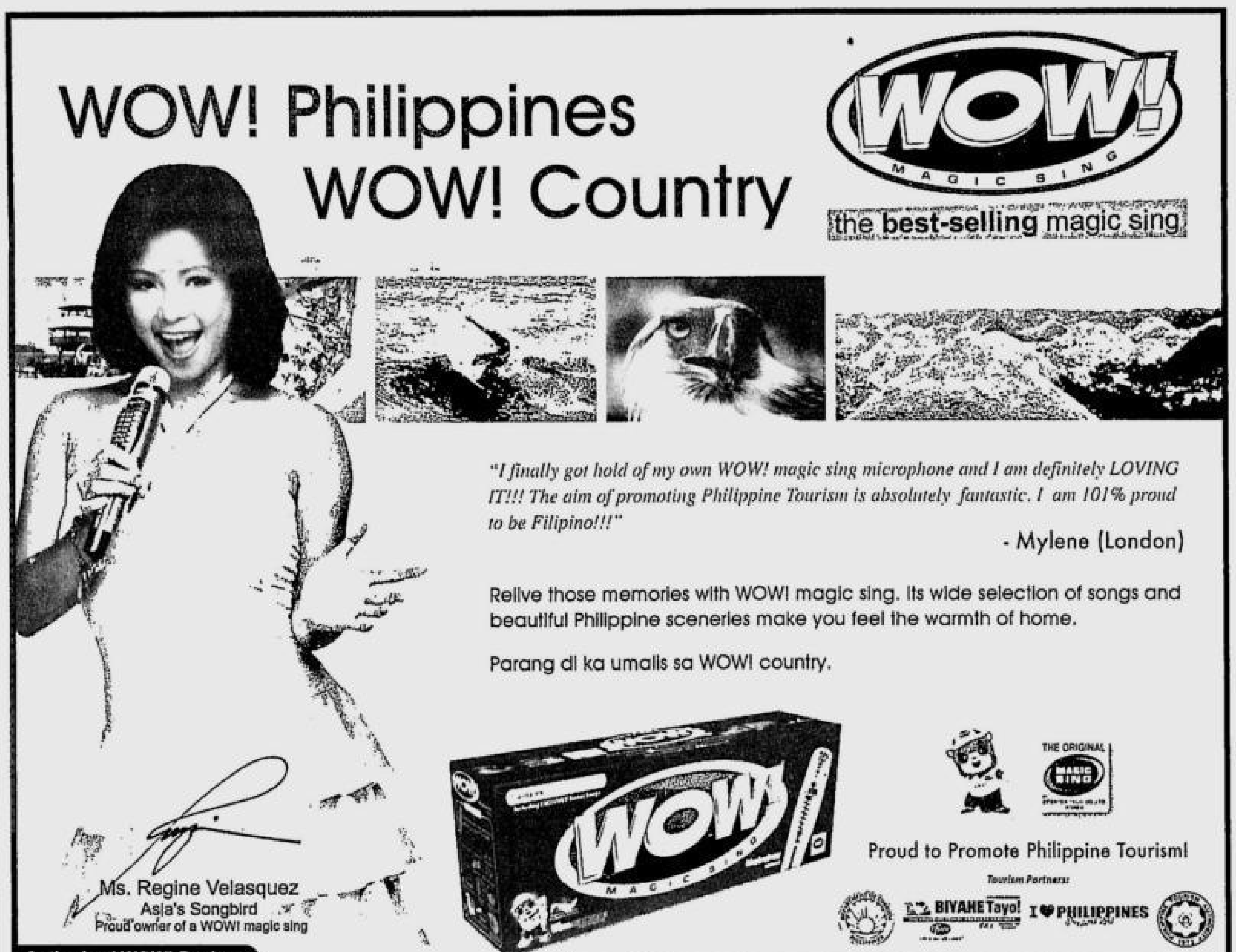
Corrections

IN THE FEB. 25 issue, the banner story—"Gawad Kalinga goes worldwide"—misstated that Gawad Kalinga chair Frank Padilla is the founder of Couples for Christ. Padilla and his wife Gerry are just one of 16 couples who joined a renewal program in 1981, which later became CFC.

* * *

IN THE SAME issue, the caption of a photo accompanying a story on Page F4 of the Sunday Lifestyle section—"Urban Zen"—misspelled the first name of a potter. The clay artist's name is Jon—not John—Pettyjohn.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Palace dares GO to debate

By Michael Lim Ubac

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY challenged the Genuine Opposition to a debate on the real state of the economy, after GO came out with full-page ads in several dailies on Monday claiming the economy was much better during the "truncated" term of President Joseph Estrada.

"We are accepting their challenge, and the only way to accept is to prove them wrong," said Presidential Chief of Staff Joey Salceda.

"We just want to establish the empirical data. The President wants them answered also—they [opposition] might think we're underestimating their intellectual capacity," said Salceda, a former Albay representative who had chaired the House committees on economic affairs and appropriations.

The ad, paid for by the "Friends of the Genuine Opposition," was titled, "So the People May Know: The Real Score on GMA's Economic Performance or Why the Nation is Worse Off than in January 2001."

"The economic posture of the administration is certainly not only plausible, I think it could be an offensive tool of the administration" in the elections, Salceda said.

"The opposition can say anything but they can't be held accountable for it because they're not the ruling elite," he said.

As proof the ad's claims were wrong, Salceda cited the following:

- The Makati Business Club said 81 percent of its members believed the economy would be much better this year compared to last year; business confidence is at the highest in 11 years.
- The stock market last year marked a 10-year high, posting a 42-percent gain.
- The real estate market grew at its fastest rate in 25 years, growing by 26.2 percent in the 3rd quarter of 2006.
- Business confidence in the country is second in the world, after India, according to the International Business Report of Grant Thornton International's survey of 32 countries.

He, however, said the debate should be set up by the media, not Malacañang, lest the administration be accused of being "so boastful."

He said he and the other members of the Palace economic team would prepare the Team Unity senatorial candidates for the debate by briefing them on the economic gains of the Arroyo administration.

He also favored the publication of a similar ad to answer the issues raised by the opposition "point-by-point."

"Let's have a catechetical (debate). Did the economy grow by 7 percent (during Estrada's time)? Yes or no? I will say no (because it only) grew by 6 percent," he said, referring to Fact No. 4 in the ad, to wit: "Per capita GDP (gross domestic product) grew by 7.1 percent in 2000 during the last year of Estrada's truncated regime."

The ad said the performance of Estrada's short-lived administration "has yet to be surpassed by GMA after six years of promising and failing."

Noynoy says LP will make sure Kiko wins

By Norman Bordadora and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

TARLAC REP. BENIGNO "Noynoy" Aquino III said the Liberal Party would work doubletime to ensure the victory of Sen. Francis Pangilinan after the Genuine Opposition dropped the reelectionist senator from its slate.

Aquino, who is now the only LP member left in the opposition ticket, said the LP has a tradition of respecting its members' views on various issues and definitely respects Pangilinan's decision to campaign as an independent instead of in the GO ticket.

"Kiko Pangilinan is a sure winner. The Liberal Party will see to that. Kiko will be the common candidate of freedom-loving Filipinos," Aquino said.

"Kiko's strong sense of independence should serve as an inspiration to our youth," he added.

"I certainly share Kiko's advocacy to keep the Senate strong as a bulwark of the check and balance system in our democracy," Aquino said.

In Iloilo City, GO candidate Rep. Francis Escudero said the LP faction led by Sen. Franklin Drilon was consulted before Pangilinan was junked.

He said the party leadership could not do anything to make Pangilinan join the GO campaign sorties as Aquino was doing.

"Both [the LP and GO] agreed that there is a limitation and their hands are tied on the issue. How do you compel a person to join a campaign that he doesn't want to be part of?" said Escudero, a member of the opposition faction of the Nationalist People's Coalition.

He said GO agonized over the decision to drop Pangilinan from the slate.

"But his nonattendance at the proclamation rally was the one that broke the camel's back," Escudero said.

The administration's Team Unity is gloating over the GO debacle.

"Pangilinan's abrupt departure from the opposition slate has left them with one wheel out. They're already breaking at the seams in just the early stage of the campaign, what more in the heat of the campaign?" said senatorial bet Michael Defensor.

Defensor said that the Pangilinan fiasco was a "tremendous boost" to Team Unity not only because GO was one man down but because his case was so "terribly mishandled" it would reflect badly on the entire slate.

"Projection-wise, it is not helping them. They are trying to insist that Kiko is with them but he says he is not. That is not good for both parties," said Defensor.

Defensor said the administration slate never considered asking Pangilinan to join the ticket and would not consider junking anybody on the team to accommodate him.

15 farmers on hunger strike taken to hospital

By TJ Burgonio

FIFTEEN OUT OF 22 NEGRENSE FARMERS on hunger strike in front of the Department of Agrarian Reform in Quezon City were rushed to the hospital yesterday suffering loss of consciousness and dehydration.

The farmers are protesting agrarian reform secretary Nasser Pangandaman's failure to install them in a sugar plantation in Negros Occidental despite a collective certificate of land ownership award (CLOA)in 2002 and a Supreme Court ruling in their favor in 2004. The farmers want the DAR to accompany them into the contested area and help avert a possible violent clash with the former land owner.

Now on their seventh day of fasting, the weakened hunger strikers were brought separately on an ambulance from the DAR office on Elliptical Road in Quezon City to the East Avenue Medical Center for treatment.

"We will not pull out until they install all of us at the hacienda," Jose Gerry Cahilig, one of the protesting farmer-beneficiaries, said in an interview in their makeshift tent outside the DAR gate. "There's simply no reason for (DAR) not to install us."

The farmer-beneficiaries of Hacienda Velez-Malaga in La Castellana town started fasting last Wednesday last week, nibbling only biscuits at night, then began a full hunger strike last Sunday.

The farmers charged Pangandaman of giving into pressure from the landlord and expressed dismay that the DAR, which had promised to finally install them in the hacienda last Feb. 6, again delayed it for "security reasons."

Peaceful installation

The protesters, part of 122 farmer-beneficiaries who hold a collective certificate of land ownership award (CLOA) to a 144-ha area in the 442-ha plantation, had clashed with farmers loyal to landowner Robert Cuenca in late January. One farmer was killed and three others were hurt.

Cuenca had opposed the awarding of lots to farmers who he claimed were non-tillers of the land. He also objected when the farmer-beneficiaries occupied some portions of the hacienda even before the DAR could address his claims, according to DAR officials.

Pangandaman conceded there was "no legal impediment" to the farmers' installation, but justified the delay, saying he was still finalizing plans for their "peaceful installation" and coordinating with Rafael Coscoluela, presidential adviser for Visayas who was talking with Cuenca.

"I just want to make sure that we can install them peacefully, and leave them behind without violence. I'm optimistic that we can resolve this before the weekend," he said in a phone interview, adding that he would call in the military and police to ensure no violence erupts.

The Secretary, who had blamed last month's clash on the farmers' sudden move to install themselves without DAR's go-signal, also said there are still pending cases in court involving the plantation. Cuenca's claims that some of the CLOA holders were not legitimate farmers still had to be threshed out, he admitted.

Those rushed to the hospital were Florinda Hilario, 40; Maria Arconilla, 54; Erlinda Gregorio, 56; Stella Garcesa, 46; Leonora Dalgontas, 46; Adelaida Santillan, 57; Robert Flores, 31; Simplicio Santillan, 20; Allan Hagokoy, 26; Ramil Maguad, 19; Gerald dela Torre, 18; Christopher Arconilla, 20, and Renato Gomez, 33; Jobert Diamante,23; and Godofredo Sillaria, 33.

The case of the La Castellana farmers has attracted support from religious and civic groups. In the morning, Lipa City Archbishop Ramon Arguelles celebrated Mass for the 22 protesters.

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US ready to help solve political killings

From page A1

tions Special Rapporteur Philip Alston, but said these were "all part of the picture to get a good assessment of what the situation is, and much more importantly, to prepare for and implement with enthusiasm and vigor the serious steps that the government has laid out."

'More can be done'

US Embassy spokesperson Matthew Lussenhop said that while the administration was addressing the issue, much more could be done—"There are ways to go forward, to help, to prosecute."

"This is obviously something that we've followed with some concern," he said.

Lussenhop said killings that remained unresolved were "not good in a democracy."

"Certainly, more can de done. There are continuing reports that unsolved killings are taking place and circumstances are murky," he said, adding:

"The crux of the matter is the need to recognize that murder is murder is murder, no matter who gets murdered or who is doing it."

Asked how the US government could help, Lussenhop said: "We've not been requested to help but if at all, we will consider it very seriously."

"It is important in every democracy that such killings are investigated," he said.

On Monday, Kenney said the Philippine government had "put together some very good ideas" that should now be put into action to stop the killings.

Human rights critical

Kenney had said that human rights were critical to every democratic country, and that any violation must be investigated and prosecuted.

According to Lussenhop, the embassy has a copy of the report of the Melo Commission, which links retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan and other military commanders to the killings.

"The report highlights the problem, and that's a concern we've been saying many times in the past," Lussenhop said.

Citing the continuing military exercises between Filipino and American troops, Kenney stressed yesterday that the US government still planned to expand its cooperation with the Armed Forces of the Philippines in such areas as counterterrorism and maritime security.

She also cited the continuing efforts in Mindanao where Filipino soldiers are hunting down members of the extremist group Abu Sayyaf.

'That's what we're doing'

The President insisted yesterday that her administration was addressing the problem.

But she did not categorically comment on Kenney's statement on Monday that "every effort" should be made to "investigate, prosecute those responsible, and exonerate the innocent."

Asked after her regular roundtable discussion on economic issues about her reaction to the concern aired by the US ambassador, Ms Arroyo said: *"Yun nga ang ginagawa natin* (That's precisely what we're doing)."

Then she reiterated the steps that her administration was taking to stop the killings, including the creation of special courts to solely handle such cases, the designation of special investigators and prosecutors, and the strengthening of the Witness Protection Program.

She had enumerated the same steps in a statement issued on Monday, saying that she was making it "a top priority to resolve the killings of political and agrarian activists and of members of the media, and to prevent further killings."

"And I am confident that we are on the right course," she had said.

Help from 'our friends'

The President added yesterday that her administration had sought the assistance of the European Union and the UN, so "our friends in other parts of the world ... can help in the capability building of the special courts, special prosecutors and special investigators."

"That's what they can do to help us," she said.

Asked by radio reporter Lilia Tolentino about her critics' purported use of the killings to malign her, the President said in Filipino: "Every issue is actually being used in politics. That's why our constant call is that the coming elections should not be about politics but about the future of our livelihood."

She refused to take further questions, telling Tolentino: "I don't answer political questions, OK?"

Ms Arroyo then thanked her guests at the roundtable discussion, which, according to the Presidential News Desk, focused "on the strong performance of the national government as well as the improvement on operational efficiencies of government corporations and what they mean to the poor."

Appreciative Palace

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said Malacañang "appreciate[d] the supportive words of Ambassador Kenney that the government is [moving] in the right direction on this issue."

"The implementation of the key recommendations of the Melo Commission report is proceeding accordingly, and we shall inform the public of important developments from time to time," he said.

Bunye said government agencies were working together to resolve the killings. He added: "The whole justice system is being brought to bear [on] solving this issue, together with the Melo Commission and the Commission on Human Rights (CHR). We are on the right track and we expect results soon."

KEEPING the conversation going: President Arroyo and US Ambassador Kristie Kenney INQUIRER PHOTO

But two administration lawmakers—Rep. Douglas Cagas of Davao del Sur and Salacnib Baterina of Ilocos Sur—were quick to assail Kenney for her remarks.

In a joint statement, Cagas and Baterina said the US government was not in a position to meddle with how the Philippine government was handling the problem.

Cagas said the US government had assumed the role of a universal policeman, yet Kenney only had to examine the records of American soldiers in Iraq to know whose forces needed indoctrination on respect for human rights."

"As the country's staunch ally, the United States knows the Philippine government has no policy to target and kill unarmed civilians," Baterina said.

He described the involvement of military officers in the extrajudicial killings as "isolated."

No exact number

The exact number is unclear, but human rights group Karapatan says more than 800 activists, peasant leaders and rights advocates have been killed since Ms Arroyo assumed the presidency in 2001.

Alston, the UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial killings, said last week that whatever the number of victims, it was "distressingly high."

Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, the Armed Forces chief of staff, has called both Alston's initial findings and the report of the Melo Commission unfair, saying both the UN team and the commission chaired by retired Supreme Court Justice Jose Melo had ignored evidence of alleged rebel assassinations and internal purges.

The militant Bagong Alyansang Makabayan said that the administration should stop labeling legal activist groups as communist, and that Ms Arroyo should issue a categorical order to the military "to desist from targeting" the organizations.

It also called for suspect military officials to be suspended to pave the way for an impartial investigation by the CHR.

"We want decisive steps to end the killings, not just moves to appease foreign observers and governments," said Bayan secretary general Renato Reyes. "We want results, and that means the body count should not go any higher than it already is." *Reports from Christine O. Avendaño, Cynthia D. Balana, Michael Lim Ubac, Christian V. Esguerra, AFP, AP*

Youth leader to leave RP if 7 scenarios happen after election

From page A1

our so-called 'Honorable Gentlemen,'" Keh said in his open letter titled "What Will Make Me Leave the Philippines."

2. If "Dancing Queen" Tessie Aquino-Oreta reclaims her Senate seat.

"I hope that all of us would still remember that dance that she did during the 2001 impeachment hearings after they voted to overrule the decision of then Chief Justice Hilario Davide. Let us make sure that people like her never make it to the Senate again," said Keh.

3. If actor and comedian Richard Gomez is elected senator.

"What does he know about making laws? We already have the likes of Bong Revilla and Lito Lapid in the Senate, and their performance, or the lack of it, would be reason enough not to elect another actor who has no prior experience in government to the distinguished halls of the Senate," the letter said.

4. If ex-Sen. Gregorio Honasan wins a Senate seat.

"I cannot believe that just because someone is charismatic, we will just elect him to become one of our senators despite the fact that he has time and again caused so much instability in our country," Keh said. "If we want a military junta similar to that of Thailand, then let's all vote for this guy."

5. If Manny Pacquiao becomes congressman of General Santos City.

"Everybody loves Manny the Boxing Champ, but Manny the Lawmaker? Let's be realistic here, Manny is our hero, but I think it takes more than just great boxing skills and a desire to serve to be able to make appropriate laws that would help uplift the lives of the many Filipinos who live in poverty," he said.

6. If Sen. Lito Lapid is elected mayor of Makati City.

"Lito Lapid as city mayor of the country's finance and business center?! Do you really think he is from Makati and has good plans for the city?" he asked.

7. If Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson, who has long been linked to illegal gambling, is elected.

Deluge of concern

Keh's short e-mail has reached the farthest corners of the world, triggering a deluge of responses from Filipinos—most of whom share his fears.

"Since I sent the e-mail on Feb. 14, I have been receiving at least 80 messages a day," Keh told the INQUIRER. "I spend about two to three hours in front of my computer just answering my mail."

"It seems that the letter has really circulated and penetrated almost every Filipino e-group all over the world," said Keh.

Keh said he was compelled to write an open letter because of the news that Garci was going to run in Bukidnon.

Keh, however, said in another e-mail sent following the huge response generated by his first letter that there were still reasons to stay in the Philippines, and Filipinos overseas could do their share by investing in education.

Invest in education

It is in education that Keh finds a brighter future for the Philippines.

And how much does it cost to invest in the country's future?

Not much, according to Keh.

Just $60, he said, could send a Filipino youth leader to a training seminar to help develop better leaders; $100 can buy a complete set of reference materials for a public elementary school library for 2,000 students, and $200 can help send a student to college for one year, as provided by Pathways to Higher Education, which Keh helped put up.

"As long as there are many more Filipinos who are willing to take a risk and invest in our country's future, then indeed there is still much hope left in the Philippines," he said.

HARVEY KEH: What would make me leave the Philippines? Let me count the ways. INQUIRER PHOTO

Credentials

Keh is executive director of Pathways to Higher Education at the Ateneo de Manila University, an organization that helps less fortunate students gain access to quality higher education in the Philippines.

He is one of the 20 Young Leaders of Asia cited on the 50th anniversary of the Asia Society, an organization founded in 1956 by John D. Rockefeller III to strengthen relationships and deepen understanding among the peoples of Asia and the United States.

He is also one of the inaugural Fellows of the Asian Institute of Management's Mirant Center for Bridging Societal Divides and executive director of Ahon Foundation, which aims to increase Filipino literacy by building libraries across the country.

What's wrong with this picture?

He was also concerned about the unusual makeup of the two major political alliances fighting over the 12 seats in the Senate.

The Team Unity ticket of President Macapagal-Arroyo has former Senators Vicente Sotto III and Tessie Aquino-Oreta, who accused Ms Arroyo of cheating their then standard-bearer Fernando Poe Jr. during the 2004 elections.

On the other hand, Senate President Manuel Villar, who as Speaker was instrumental in the impeachment of former President Joseph Estrada, is now part of the United Opposition, which is led by Estrada himself.

"Now, if you don't see anything wrong with this picture then you must be one of the many Filipinos who have accepted this very sad reality that there is indeed no permanent ideals that our government leaders stand up for, but rather, they just go where their self-interest can best be served," Keh said in his e-mail.

"It is this kind of politics [that explains] why I no longer wonder why good people like Ramon Magsaysay Awardee Mayor Jesse Robredo of Naga City or outstanding Bulacan Gov. Josie de la Cruz will find it hard, or worse, never be elected to national positions," Keh said.

Be more vigilant

Keh appealed to his fellow Filipinos to do their share to shape the outcome of the elections in May.

"I think it is time that Filipinos became more vigilant and critical in selecting our leaders for the sake of our future and the generations that will go beyond us. So I appeal to every Filipino who asks what can I actually do for my country, choose and vote for the right people in the coming elections," he said.

He appealed to Filipinos in his open letter not to be influenced by candidates on the basis of a catchy jingle or a cute poster.

"Let us choose leaders who have a good track record for service and who are genuinely committed toward serving our country," he said.

THE PEOPLE'S Republic of China donated about 1,700 tents worth $800,000 for victims of Typhoon "Reming." JESS YUSON

DSWD on Bicol relief ...

From page A1

tents that we have delivered?" she said.

Of the 1,887 units sent, 420 tents are large enough to serve as makeshift classrooms, Cabral said. The rest are "one-family" tents, each with ground space of 9 to 12 square meters.

Other donations

Cabral said that aside from the tents delivered by the DSWD, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority had constructed 417 temporary shelters for the evacuees.

She said various donors had donated an undetermined number of tents that were not coursed through the DSWD.

"If all of them have been used and yet there is still congestion, then we can do something about it," she added.

Some 3,000 families remain at 18 evacuation centers, all in Albay, from a high of 20,000 families that were displaced by Reming, according to DSWD records.

Among the one-family tents received by the DSWD from foreign governments were 150 units from Japan and 150 units from Singapore. China has also donated 1,280 one-family tents and 420 big tents, according to Cabral.

The DSWD has turned over the tents to local government units in Region V, she said.

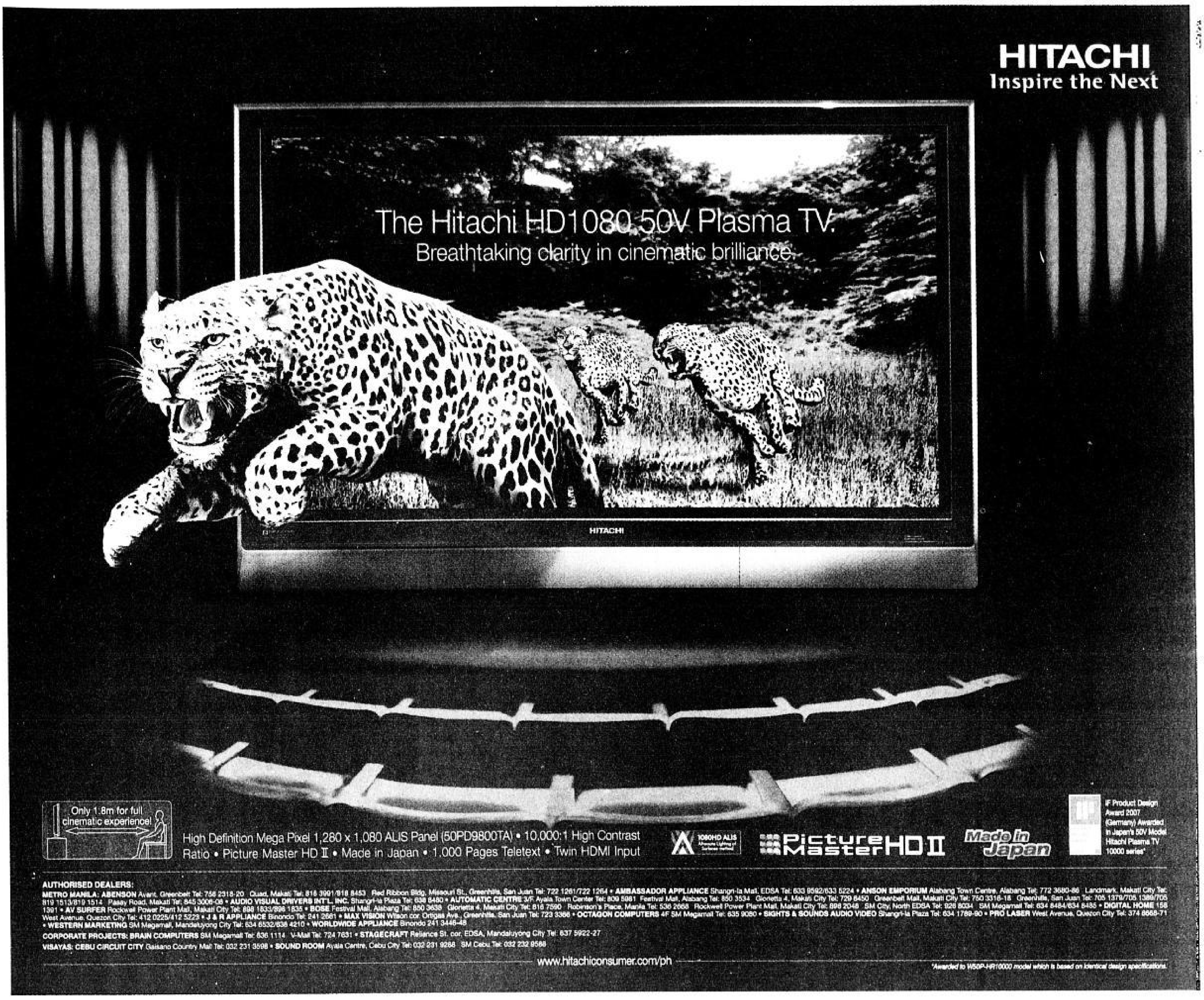
'Not for sale'

Some of the donations became part of the relief goods delivered via the "Malacañang to Mayon Caravan" that reached Bicol on Dec. 13.

Earlier this month, Cabral ordered all her regional directors to stamp the DSWD logo as well as "Not for Sale" markings on all of the department's relief goods, whether food items, toiletries, bedding or tents.

The move is seen not only as a preemptive measure against unscrupulous parties who may resell the goods for profit, but also as the DSWD's way of addressing perceptions that government aid had failed to reach certain parts of Bicol, because the beneficiaries could not easily tell DSWD relief goods from unmarked private donations.

Some evacuees also said that relief donations had been stored in unidentified sites, supposedly for distribution during the May elections.



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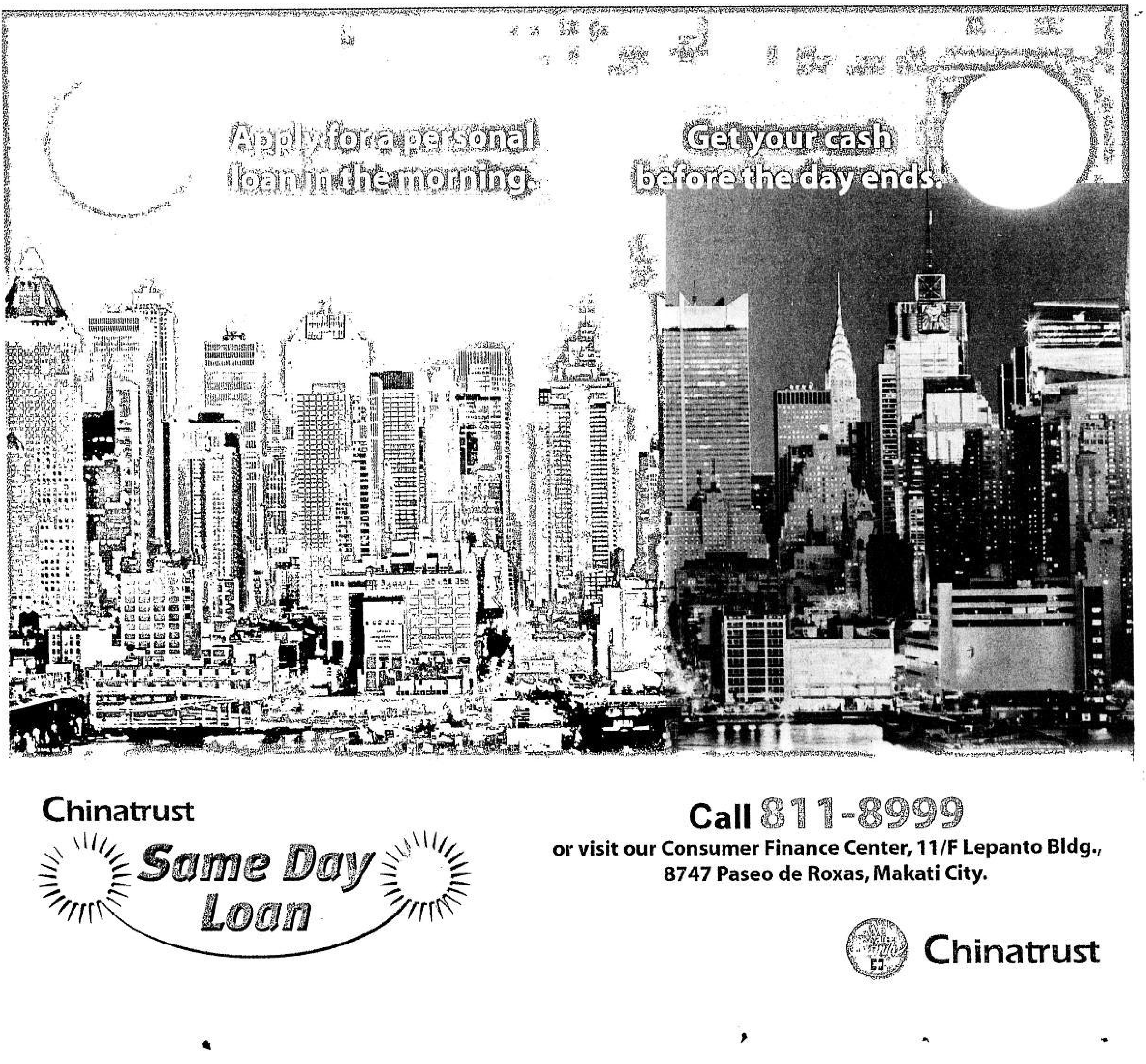

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GO to boycott elections if ...

By Nikko Dizon

THE GENUINE OPPOSITION (GO) TICket will pull out of the May elections if the Commission on Elections refuses to give the party the sixth copy of the election returns, according to an opposition lawyer.

Sixto Brillantes, a lawyer of the United Opposition, said this after talking with the presidents of UNO and other political parties under GO.

"If [Comelec] accredits Lakas and Kampi [as the dominant majority and minority parties], we will not join this election," he told reporters yesterday.

If opposition parties boycott the May 14 elections, he warned that the country would be "looking at some extra-constitutional scenario."

Brillantes said the various election laws—Republic Act 6646, RA 7166, and RA 9369—clearly referred to the opposition when they speak of the "dominant minority party."

"It is foolish to give election returns to two parties belonging to the administration. The elections might be rigged and we don't even get a copy of the election returns? Who else would participate? We were cheated the last time, and now we won't even be given a copy of the election returns?" he said in a mix of English and Filipino.

Brillantes said the UNO should be the dominant minority party because it is a coalition of two parties, the Partido ng Masang Pilipino (PMP) and the PDP-Laban, "who are known to be opposition".

He said if UNO is declared the dominant minority party, it would share the sixth copy of the election returns with the other parties under GO.

Brillantes said the composition of the senatorial slates in the current elections should not be used in determining who should be the dominant majority and minority parties as members of the same party have joined either the administration or opposition tickets.

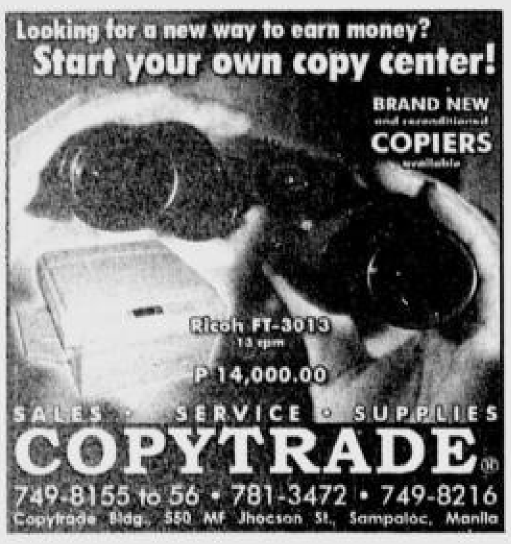
He cited the case of the Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC) whose members Tito Sotto and Tessie Aquino-Oreta are with the administration slate, while two other members Francis Escudero and Nikki Coseteng are with the opposition ticket.

Comelec chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. has declined to comment any further on the issue, saying to do so would be sub judice since the case is being heard by the commission en banc.

But he said he would ensure that the system of check and balance in determining the election results would be preserved.

Brillantes advised Abalos to refrain from making statements on "matters that are quasi-judicial in character" such as the issue of declaring the dominant majority and minority parties.

"Then maybe the Comelec will have credibility and its [image] will be better than before," Brillantes said.



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Let Gringo, Trillanes go on TV—Comelec

By Nikko Dizon

THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS will ask the security agencies holding senatorial candidates Navy Lt. Antonio Trillanes IV and former senator Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan in custody to let them participate in the poll body's candidates' forum to be aired over a local cable news channel.

Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. said yesterday Trillanes' and Honasan's participation would not pose a security risk since the two would not have to leave their cells but could join the forum via remote broadcast.

"They may not be allowed out but we will see to it that they will still be heard. Cameras could be placed where they are. (This is) so that everybody is given an equal opportunity," Abalos said, referring to all the senatorial candidates.

Honasan and Trillanes are both facing coup d'etat charges arising from the failed 2003 Oakwood mutiny.

Trillanes is in the custody of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, detained at the Bonifacio Naval Station in Fort Bonifacio.

Honasan is being held by the Philippine National Police at Camp Sto. Domingo in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

Trillanes is in the Genuine Opposition (GO) ticket, while Honasan is running as an independent.

"This is a beautiful opportunity for our candidates, at the same time a beautiful opportunity for our voters to know who they will be voting for," Abalos said.

Abalos said he had signed a contract with cable news channel ANC for the hour-long programs that would air from March 12 to April 30 with three candidates featured in each episode.

Abalos said the candidates' appearance would not be counted against their broadcast ad limit.

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Lawyers wage proxy word war for Noli, Loren

OPPOSITION SENATORIAL CANdidate Loren Legarda is using her protest against Vice President Noli de Castro to gain media mileage for her candidacy, but Legarda insists she was just trying to save the government money in authorizing the release of the ballot boxes involved in her protest.

And the two rivals for the vice presidency in the 2004 election have allowed their lawyers to extend a proxy "word war" well into the campaign for midterm elections.

Romulo Macalintal, De Castro's lawyer in the electoral protest, had said Legarda's sincerity in pursuing her electoral protest was doubtful as "she only intends to use this as her political propaganda for her senatorial bid."

Macalintal said, Legarda's refusal to withdraw her case after she filed her certificate of candidacy for senator would still cost the government millions in the coming elections despite her motion at the Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET) to release and open the ballot boxes covered by her electoral protest because the process of doing so entails expense.

Legarda had filed a motion at the PET to release and open the ballot boxes, claiming that by doing so, millions of government funds can be saved by using the concerned ballots boxes in the coming elections instead of buying new ones.

"This is not true. In fact, the government will spend more or even double if her motion would be followed because it entails a costly process," he added, citing the expenses in the recording of serial numbers, the number of ballots and documents, and the posting of watchers and representatives, and other expenses required to safeguard the contested ballot boxes.

"The only way she can help the nation save funds this coming elections is for her to withdraw her case or faithfully pursue it. She cannot have both work for her advantage to the prejudice of the public," he added.

But Sixto Brillantes, Legarda's lawyer, said the former senator only wanted to help the Commission on Elections save millions of pesos by authorizing the release of ballot boxes so they can be used for the May elections.

"I am surprised at my *compañero's* vehemence in denouncing Loren's motion to release the ballot boxes involved in her protest for use of the Comelec to save money," said Brillantes. "As an election lawyer who appears regularly before the Comelec, Mr. Macalintal should be among the first to welcome Senator Legarda's move to release the ballot boxes to save the government money in buying new ones to replace them."

Brillantes said "no less than Chairman Benjamin Abalos and the five commissioners of the Comelec have praised Loren for moving to release the ballot boxes for use in the May elections. Why should Atty. Macalintal object when the Comelec itself welcomes the move because it would save them millions of pesos in expenses?"

He said Macalintal let "the cat out of the bag" when he urged Legarda to withdraw her protest altogether.

In his statement, Macalintal said that if Loren really wanted "to do great service to the nation…that could be done only if she withdraws the case altogether or faithfully pursues it."

"What Macalintal wants is for Loren to drop the case. Is he afraid of the truth? Loren filed the protest case not just because she was cheated out of the vice presidency in the 2004 elections, but because she wanted the truth to come," Brillantes said.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, February 28, 2007
1st Week of Lent

1st Reading:	Jon 3:1-10
Gospel:	Luke 11:29-32

As the crowd increased, Jesus began to speak in this way, "People of the present time are evil people. They ask for a sign, but no sign will be given to them except the sign of Jonah. As Jonah became a sign for the people of Nineveh, so will the Son of Man be a sign for this generation. The Queen of the South will rise up on Judgment Day with the people of these times and accuse them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and here there is greater than Solomon. The people of Nineveh will rise up on Judgment Day with the people of these times and accuse them, for Jonah's preaching made them turn from their sins, and here there is greater than Jonah."

Commentary

Jonah the prophet is sent to Nineveh (think of Los Angeles spread out) and to his great dismay they all repent. He preaches of the forgiveness of God and God's patience with us all. It is in our actions and turning from evil that repentance is known in our hearts/souls. We have 40 days too, all of us to fast, do penance, give alms, and stop the evil we participate in with others, with systems, governments, and corporations. From the greatest to the least we must all stop doing evil!

We must listen to the word of God in Jesus and do what Jesus does—obeying and being attentive to the will of God. That is always life for all. There is no other sign given for we have been given the sign of Jesus crucified and risen from the dead, the sign of God's wisdom in Jesus' word and presence among the poor and those who acknowledge their sin. We need no other sign.

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Poll canvassers exempt from gun ban

By Jerome Aning

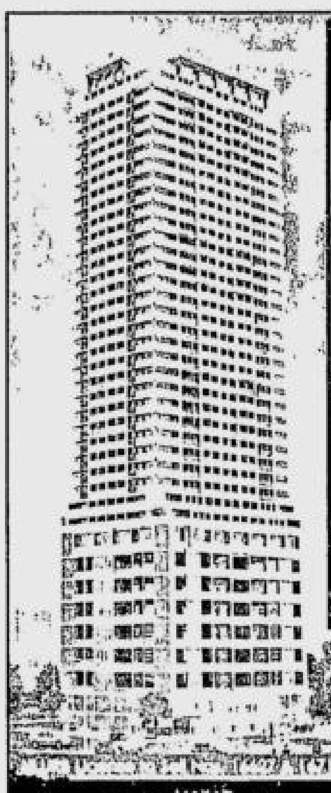
THE COMMISSION on Election has given all members of the boards of canvassers automatic exemption from the gun ban.

In Resolution No. 7827 approved on Feb. 22 but published only yesterday, the Commission en banc said ensuring the safety of the chairs, vice chairs and other members local boards of canvassers was the primary reason behind the grant of automatic exemptions.

Municipal and city election officers, provincial elections supervisors, district school supervisors, division superintendent of schools, and city, district and provincial prosecutors usually comprise the canvassing boards in the local level.

The resolution, however, said the automatic exemption was only effective from the start of the canvass until the proclamation of the winning candidates.

This means the canvassers must still apply from Comelec for gun ban exemption for the rest of the election period not covered by the resolution.



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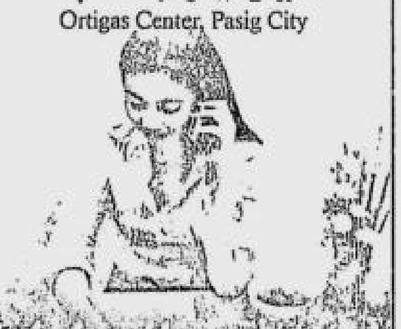

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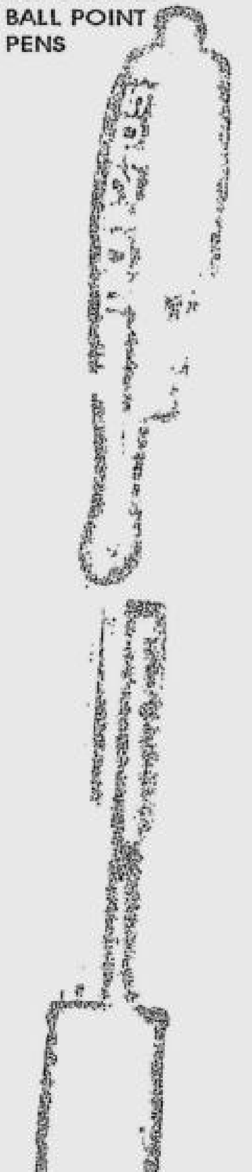

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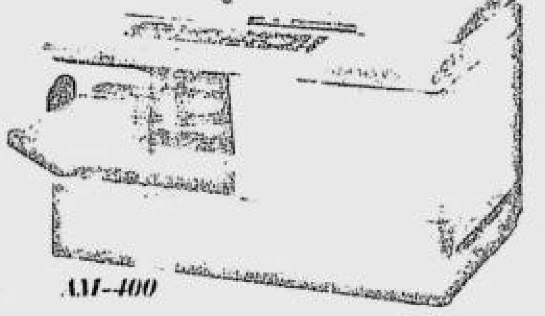

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British bank sees tighter monetary policy after May polls

By Doris C. Dumlao

BRITISH BANKING GIANT HSBC sees the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas gradually tightening monetary policy by scrapping the tiering system on short-term money after the midterm elections in May.

While the country's inflation rate is on a downtrend, the money supply is "growing too fast for comfort," HSBC economist Frederic Neumann said in a commentary dated Feb. 16.

The economist said the elections in themselves were "unlikely to provide major surprises," unlike previous polls which were often marked by political turmoil and uncertainty on the future course of macroeconomic policy.

But while political risks have waned, Neumann said the BSP would likely keep its monetary settings on hold until after the elections.

"While the country's central bank is nominally independent, the inevitable political consequences of monetary policy decisions may make officials more prudent when weighing policy changes," Neumann said.

"In our view, monetary conditions are likely to tighten at some point this year as the central bank removes the tiering scheme," he said, noting that the tiering scheme had led to a collapse in money market rates.

Tiering

Tiering is a system whereby the BSP pays a lower rate for short-term money placed by banks in excess of certain threshold levels, to encourage banks to lend out instead of parking all their funds with the monetary authority.

Under this system, only the first P5 billion of short-term money placed with the BSP will be paid the 7.5-percent overnight borrowing rate. The next P5 billion will yield 200 basis points less (5.5 percent) and placements in excess of P10 billion will yield 400 basis points less (3.5 percent).

Strong inflows of foreign money had jacked up the year-on-year growth in domestic liquidity further to 21.4 percent in December from 18.5 percent in November.

Domestic liquidity, or m3, is the broadest measure of money and is used to estimate the entire supply of money within an economy. It includes money in circulation, demand deposits, money market funds and short-term repurchase agreements.

Politically sensitive

"At this stage, however, a gradual tightening of monetary policy may prove to be too disruptive and therefore politically sensitive. Moreover, inflation is likely to remain low for another several months, buying the BSP time to assess whether tiering has had the desired effect on credit growth," Neumann said.

He said fiscal policy would also likely be broadly unchanged until after the elections, when the administration may decide to slow its fiscal consolidation program in order to raise growth during its three remaining years in office.

"The administration has repeatedly emphasized its determination to stick to its accelerated budget consolidation schedule, targeting a surplus by 2008. But there is a risk that this date will be pushed back when the President returns with a fresh political mandate," Neumann said.

No risk to fiscal stability

He said greater expenditure may not necessarily endanger overall fiscal stability and would even help ease huge infrastructure bottlenecks.

"Nevertheless, slippage from the current deficit reduction schedule, even if marginal, could spark a sudden correction of market expectations of more rapid consolidation," Neumann said.

Presidential Chief of Staff Joey Salceda earlier unveiled Malacañang's ambitious "7-8-9" plan to jack up economic growth for this year until 2009 and move the rate closer to faster-growing neighbors in Asia.

The plan calls for a higher gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate than government economic planners had so far officially adopted as targets—7 percent for this year, 8 percent for 2008 and 2009.

PRC starts drafting resolution for voluntary retake of nursing test

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

NO END to woes for passers of the leak-tainted June 2006 nursing board exams. REM ZAMORA

NURSES WHO PASSED THE SCANDAL-smeared June 2006 licensure examination will have to retake portions of the test before they can work in the United States—and this time it is not only the US Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools that is talking.

The Professional Regulation Commission is already drafting a resolution which will "harmonize" local retake guidelines with that of the CGFNS, a nursing group leader involved in the process told the INQUIRER yesterday.

The source privy to the resolution but not authorized to talk about it also said the new resolution would adjust an earlier resolution from the Board of Nursing, which would have ordered all passers to return their licenses and retake the exam, matching the guidelines of the CGFNS.

The new resolution will order the voluntary retake of Tests III (medical-surgical nursing) and V (psychiatric nursing), the source said.

Hope lingers

PRC chair Leonor Rosero confirmed that a resolution was being drafted but said the contents were still being discussed with the labor department and other nursing groups.

But she is not abandoning, yet, her hope that the CGFNS will have a change of heart.

Rosero said members of the task group formed to appeal the decision would still push through with their plan of meeting with the CGFNS.

Brion looking for funds

She said the task group would explain what really happened and find out how the CGFNS arrived at its decision.

University of the Philippines Institute of Health Policy and Development Studies director Marilyn Lorenzo, who is also helping resolve the issue, said procedures for a retake were already being ironed out.

Labor Secretary Arturo Brion was already looking for funds to allow the PRC to administer the retake for free, she said.

10,000 will retake test

"We are also talking to good universities and schools to help out in the review," Lorenzo said. This way, those who will retake the exam will not have to spend again.

Lorenzo said at least 10,000 of the 17,000 passers of the June 2006 exam were expected to voluntarily retake the exams. She said the retakers could join the exams in June or December this year.

Lorenzo stressed that the CGFNS decision affected only those who wanted to work in the United States.

Elmer Labog, chair of the militant labor group Kilusang Mayo Uno, said the government should be blamed for the mess.

"Despite the public outrage about the leakage, no one was made accountable and everything was just swept under the rug," Labog said.

The Department of Justice on Monday said it would reopen its investigation into the leakage.

Not one indicted?

However, Labog said that although KMU had "great faith in the capacities of our nurses, we cannot speak the same for the PRC, the Board of Nursing and other government agencies that neglected the leakage case filed by the nurses themselves."

He lamented that one review center that witnesses claimed was involved, along with 19 people, remained to be indicted. *With a report from Jerome Aning*

GMA backs Congress team's last-ditch plea

From page A1

day said she had asked a congressional team to make a last-ditch appeal for reconsideration.

Ms Arroyo also said it would be best not to talk about the option of a retake of the examination for now because such talk could sabotage the efforts of the congressional team led by Bacolod Rep. Monico Puentevella.

The team plans to leave for the United States on March 3 hoping to meet with CGFNS officials. It will include Professional Regulation Commission chair Leonor Rosero, ex-Board of Nursing chair Eufemia Octaviano, Dr. Remigia Nathanielz, president of the Association of Deans of Philippine Colleges of Nursing, and Renato Aquino, president of the anti-retake Alliance of New Nurses.

Malacañang officials said Ms Arroyo was prepared to order a retake of the examination—and make the government pay for the expenses—if the last-ditch mission failed.

Presidential Chief of Staff Jose Ma. Salceda said Malacañang could allocate P17 million from the President's contingency fund to finance the retake.

"Puentevella asked her if she could (withhold) pronouncements (about a retake) so that they will have a moral backing when they go to the US. Actually, she is prepared to announce that we will pay for the retake," Salceda said.

"The administration will certainly pay for it. I have cleared it with the President," Salceda said.

'Just shout'

Salceda and Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya Jr. said the government could even shoulder the fees the nurses would pay for their review.

"If they shout louder, I think we will (pay for the review as well). All we need is for them to shout louder," Salceda said.

The CGFNS has declared it will not issue VisaScreen certificates to Filipino nurses who passed the June 2006 exam unless they take another test equivalent to the leak-marred Tests III and V. The certificates are required for US employment.

"A task force from Congress led by Congressman Monico Puentevella asked for one more chance to go to America to appeal this ruling so we are giving them that chance," Ms Arroyo, speaking in Filipino, said in an interview after her weekly roundtable forum in Malacañang.

'Don't talk about retake'

She said Puentevella asked her to give his team up to March 4. She said even the Philippine Nurses Association asked her for time to appeal the CGFNS decision.

"So we should not talk about a retake because it might look like we are sabotaging the effort of this congressional task force. Let's give them a chance," Ms Arroyo said.

Salceda and Andaya defended the President's assertion that make an appeal despite the CGFNS' assertion that it would be futile to do so. They said this was not meant to prolong the agony of the exam passers, who have been in limbo since the leakage scandal broke out.

"We will immediately know whether the last ditch effort is really futile," Salceda said.

"There is nothing to lose," he added.

"*E kung maka-tsamba*. (What if we get lucky?) It's just exhausting all options," Andaya said. "If the CGFNS does not change its position, there is always that option to retake."

One more chance

Salceda tried to make light of the matter by comparing the Palace move to the decision of television talk show host Kris Aquino to stay married to basketball star James Yap despite rumors he had an illicit affair with a beauty clinic receptionist. *(Story on Page A1.)*

"Give them one last try. *Kung si James Yap nga, pinagbigyan ni Kris ilang beses na*," Salceda said.

Puentevella said the CGFNS might have been fed the wrong information, which led to its decision.

No final ruling

"It's a big possibility," he told the INQUIRER.

Puentevella noted that the Supreme Court had not yet ruled with finality on the petition for a retake of the exams when CGFNS officials visited the country in September last year.

"We suspect that they were fed with the wrong information by people from our own nursing industry," he said.

Puentevella said the task force would furnish the CGFNS with documents explaining how local officials settled the mess. He said the PRC would also explain the formula it used to recompute the scores which eventually reconfigured the final list of "successful" examinees.

The CGFNS earlier said that "no useful purpose would be served by Rosero coming to the United States to make an appeal."

No higher authority

"There is no process or provision for an appeal or reconsideration of a board decision. There is no higher authority than the board of trustees," CGFNS chief executive officer Barbara Nichols told Rosero, according to a CGFNS statement.

Puentevella said he was told by Ms Arroyo to "exhaust all means" to gain a favorable response from the CGFNS.

"If we succeed, it will be a new life for them. If we fail, at least we tried everything and tried our best," he said.

'All for retake'

An examinee who was among the topnotchers in the June 2006 exam told the INQUIRER that some of the passers opposed to a retake did not necessarily speak for the "majority" of the passers.

"They keep talking and talking without taking into consideration the real sentiments of the majority of the examinees," the passer said. "We are all for the retake and we just want to move on with our lives."

HK man, 107, reveals…

From page A1

"I don't know why I have lived this long," Chan Chi—one of Hong Kong's oldest persons—was quoted as saying in the South China Morning Post during an annual feast for the city's elders.

"Maybe it has to do with the fact that I have lived a sex-less life for many years—since I was 30," said Chan, a widower whose youthful bride perished during the Japanese invasion in World War II.

Chan, from Hong Kong's less built-up New Territories hinterland, was pictured looking sprightly and eating heartily at the banquet.

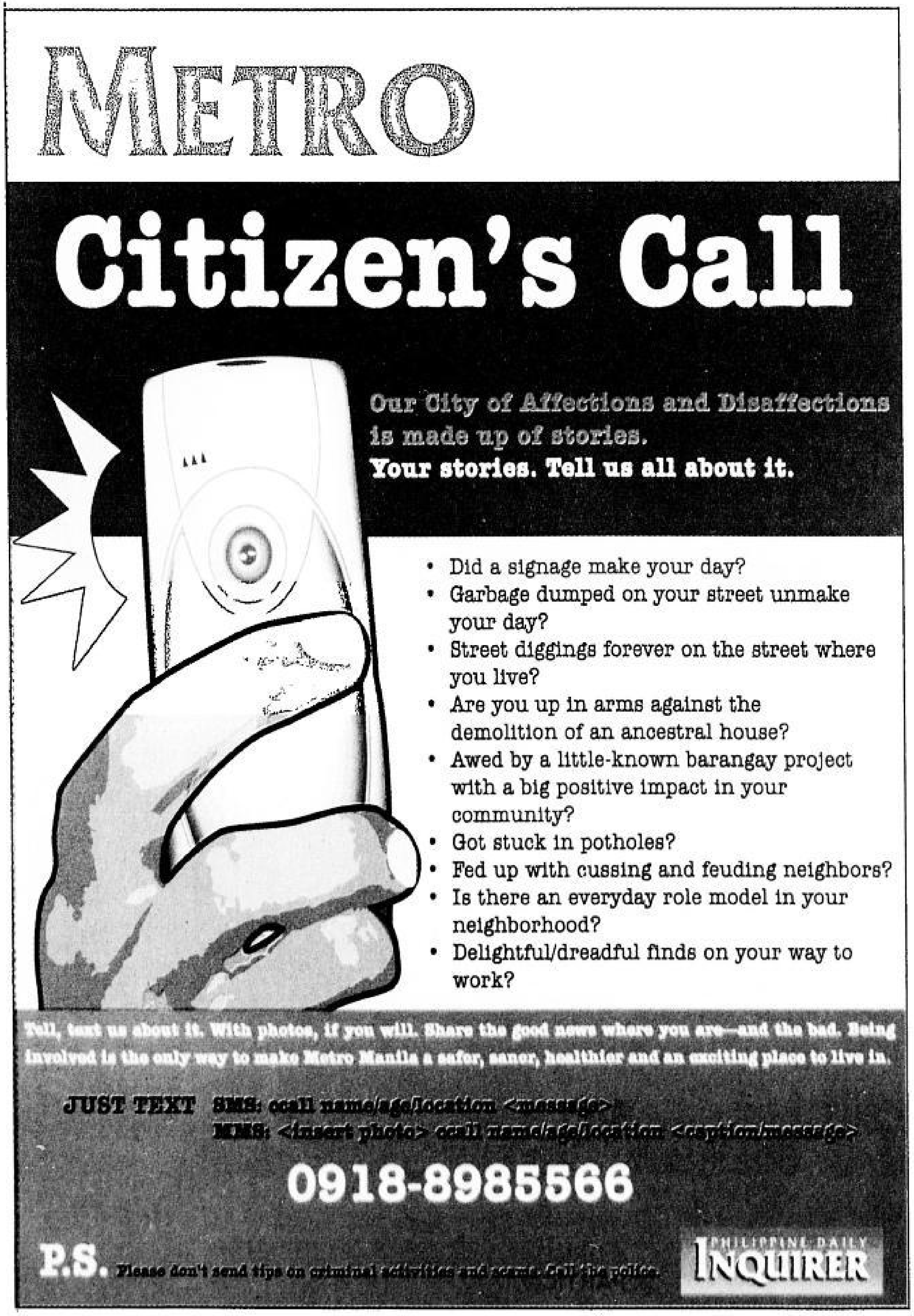
He smokes

A former chef, he said a low-fat diet and regular dawn exercises had helped him fight off the ravages of old age.

But the centenarian, who's had no difficulty living a monastic existence for nearly 80 years, admits the pleasures of tobacco have been harder to resist.

"Now I want to quit," he was quoted as saying of his decades-long cigarette addiction.

"Maybe the government should ban cigarette sales so I can give it up," he added. *Reuters*



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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Naia terminals to have centralized security system

MANILA WILL HAVE A CENTRALIZED security monitoring system of all airport facilities once the new Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia Terminal 3) opens in March or April, according to Naia security chief Ret. Gen. Angel Atutubo.

The single integrated security system will be based in a security building at Terminal 3, he said.

Atutubo said the security facility is like a military style war room where authorities can monitor operations in all areas where security forces are deployed. Security cameras placed in terminals 1, 2 and 3 will feed images into the war room.

"If [the system is] centralized, there will be faster coordination. It will be economical and the [electricity] consumption will be reduced," said Atutubo.

Response to emergencies will also be faster as officials will have radio communication with personnel on the ground, he said.

The security building's set-up is part of the phase-by-phase opening of the Naia 3, whose test run has been finally set for next month after years of delay.

The Manila International Airport Authority (Miaa) has been spending the past few months preparing for the target "rolling opening," a partial operation that will entail actual departures and arrivals of a few flights to test the new terminal's passenger and baggage handling systems.

But the equipment for the security building still has to be bought, he said.

The government gained control over the facility by paying its builder, the Philippine International Air Terminals (Piatco), P3.2 billion as down payment for the cost of construction pending the resolution of court cases arising from the government's voiding of Piatco's contract to build the terminal.

Piatco is claiming a compensation of $500 million, while the government has appraised the cost of building the terminal at $320 million.

Miaa has yet to finalize the list of airlines that will operate in the new terminal. It said Philippine Airlines (PAL) was definitely negotiating to locate there.

PAL, whose international and domestic operations are based at the Naia's Centennial Terminal (Terminal 2), is considering moving its operations to the new terminal, said spokesperson Rolly Estabillo.

"We're looking into the possibility of transferring there. Our basic requirement is that we should be operating our international and domestic flights under one roof for efficiency in operations and the convenience of our passengers," he said.

"It has been proven in the case of Terminal 2 where there has been seamless transfer of passengers from one gate to another," he said. *Tarra Quismundo*

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ISSN 0116-2642
INQUIRER
Vol. 22 No. 82

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THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, INC. has its business and editorial offices at
•Chino Roces Ave corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
•P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City
•Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
•Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 •Advertising 897-4807
•Circulation 527-3342 / 527-3348 / 528-0183 / 528-0186 and 528-0213 / Fax: 528-02-34.
•Subscription Hotline 896-6000

Deaf and blind

EDITORIAL

IT USED TO BE SAID WITH EXASPERATION OF THE royals of France that even when they were restored to power, "they learned nothing and forgot nothing." The same thing can be said as President Macapagal-Arroyo tries to wriggle out of a situation of her own administration's making: the increasingly negative international attitude toward her human rights record.

While the administration has increasingly leaned toward the Right in its policies, its attitude toward Uncle Sam is quite transparent. If there's anything that can jump-start government attention on something, it's a comment from the US ambassador. The President was more than willing to bluff her way with the European Union, but notice the alacrity with which an expression of US concern was met.

US Ambassador Kristie Kenney said, "Human rights are critical to every country that is a democracy and I think the important thing right now is that the Philippine government has put together some very good ideas. Let's get them into action."

Immediately, there was action. The official American opinion is quite clear: the counterinsurgency efforts of its Philippine ally are counterproductive.

And so, a five-point program was rapidly unveiled by the President. The five points are basically these:

Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Sergio Apostol has been asked to monitor the effects of the President's rhetoric on human rights. Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez has been instructed to make it easier for people to join his department's Witness Protection Program. The Commission on Human Rights, criticized in the past by the administration because it took its mandate too seriously, now has a big, fat bone to chew: the P25 million thrown at it by the President. AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon has been told to refine his Feb. 4 directive, urging adherence to the principle of command responsibility, though how remains to be seen, considering that Esperon himself criticized that principle before the Melo Commission. Finally, Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo has been told to beg the European Union for help in investigating the killings—help the administration was disinclined to seek and accept in the past.

All five points are pointless, because they are cosmetic. They are cosmetic because they prove the administration has learned nothing, and that the Armed Forces, by means of its latest revelations, has forgotten nothing. The counterinsurgency program of the government, as crafted by National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales, is as old as the Romans: create a wasteland and call it peace. The idea is to liquidate all state opponents, either by turning a blind eye to assassination squads or by fomenting division among the rebels. The woes of an enemy on the run is then compounded by bludgeoning to submission the civilian population in areas where rebels operate.

The problem with this is that it requires the garrisoning of areas cleared of opposition, as the Romans did. But that is something the AFP has neither the resources nor the discipline to fully accomplish. The result is to perpetuate a power vacuum, resulting in large areas of the country existing like a kind of no-man's land, where government is too weak to enforce its authority, where the rebels can engage in reprisals, and where the civilian population judges both sides as to which is less harsh—and time and again, the insurgents turn out to be the lesser evil.

Instead of reexamining why it is that the loyalty and confidence of the public in the government and the AFP are so weak, both compound their weaknesses by putting a premium on the temporary military administration of the provinces. And they try to achieve it without the necessary follow-through, which is setting up a permanent, responsive and responsible government in those areas.

What happens is this: The AFP swoops in, people are rounded up, good soldiers end up identified with the shadowy operations of the bloodthirsty ones, and the civilian population only has the cold comfort of being told they're at least "dissident-free." There are no roads, bridges, schoolhouses, health services and good government for them to experience—only fear.

And the public is expected to clap and cheer when told that the communists kill their own and anyone they despise? But then everyone knows this. The question is, why aren't our armed forces any better?

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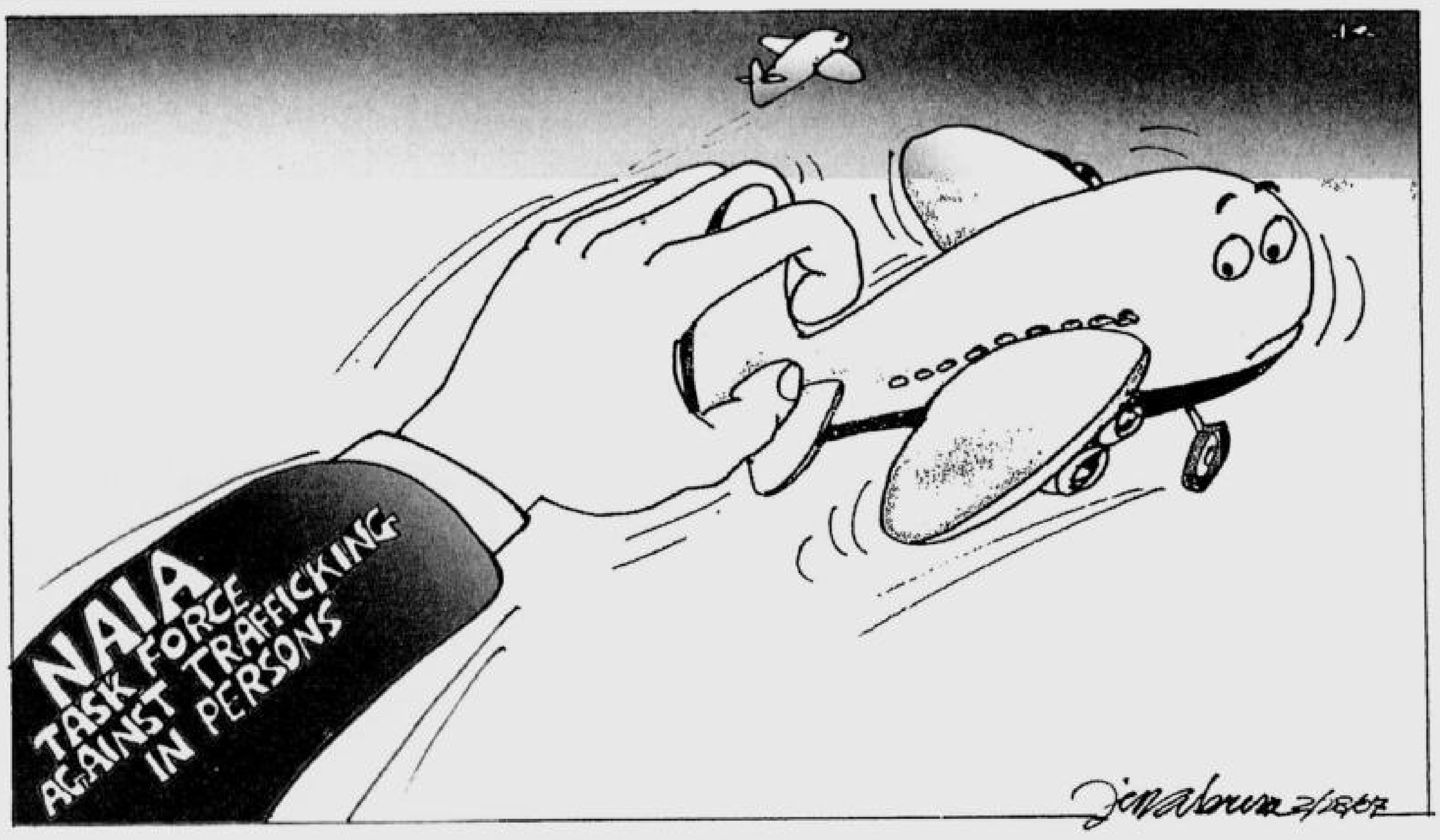


The untold story of Edsa 1 (Part 2)

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

(Continued from last Monday)

IT IS NOT GENERALLY KNOWN BUT THE People Power 1 of February 1986 may not have materialized, had not some police officers, specifically Gen. Alfredo Lim, chief of the Northern Police District, slyly disobeyed orders from President Ferdinand Marcos to disperse the crowds at Edsa. The rebels had holed up at Camp Crame. Malacañang sent soldiers with tanks to assault Crame but could not get through the crowds.

At daybreak of the second day, Sunday, when Butz Aquino and his August 21 Movement (Atom), left Edsa after an all-night vigil, less than 1,000 people were left there. Lim, who had 800 policemen, could have easily dispersed them and cleared the way for the soldiers to assault the rebels on Crame. But he played possum all Sunday morning, ignoring calls from Malacañang and superior officers and mobile units sent out to look for him. About noon, he finally went to Edsa. There he was called by Lt. Gen. Fidel Ramos from Camp Crame. Their conversation was one of the most crucial at Edsa.

"Fred, what are your orders?" Ramos asked.

"My orders, sir, are to disperse the crowds at Edsa at all costs."

"Fred, if there's a dispersal, we will all be wiped out here. I have with me Minister Enrile, former Chiefs of Staff Espino and Vargas, Assemblyman Cayetano, among many others. Our only weapons are M-16s and M-14s, which are ineffective against artillery, tanks and mortars. I hear there is an Army CDC group there and they are armed with heavy weapons."

"No sir, I talked with Colonel Javier and he told me that their only equipment are riot batons and shields."

"You check. Their weapons are hidden in their 6 x 6 trucks. Anyway, Fred, *bahala ka na.*"

That won Lim over completely. Ramos did not just say: "Do not disperse!" He was tactful enough to leave the decision to the police superintendent.

"I felt like I was sitting on a volcano," Lim said.

Then there was Butz Aquino asking, "Are you going to disperse us?"

"No."

"*Usapang lalaki?*" Butz pressed.

"*Usapang lalaki*" Lim said as he shook hands with Butz who hurried out to inform his waiting companions.

At 5 p.m., Lim was notified that Malacañang was looking for him. He rang up the Study Room, and he heard a furious Marcos saying: "General, you failed me!" and demanding to be told why there was no dispersal.

"Mr. President, it is physically impossible to conduct dispersal operations."

"Why? Why?" Marcos demanded.

"Because there are 35,000 to 45,000 people on Edsa and I have only 126 men with me." (These 126 men under Colonel Dawis were the only ones Lim ordered to be with him. The rest he had deliberately left behind at Camp Sikatuna.)

"All right, listen," said Marcos. "I will send you additional reinforcements: two more Army battalions. But be sure to disperse at all costs! Tell the crowd to go home, that Crame is going to be shelled."

"Yes sir, Mr. President."

As Lim was mulling what to do, a call came from his *compadre*, Gen. Victor Natividad, who had just been appointed PC chief in place of Ramos. Natividad told Lim to join him at the Meralco compound on Ortigas Avenue, and to bring along the Army CDC group.

"So we went to the Meralco compound in Ortigas and waited for General Natividad. And before us passed these tanks from the Edsa-Ortigas crossing. We didn't know these were the tanks stopped by nuns and other brave spirits and forced to detour from Edsa. This was around 6 p.m."

Shortly after, Natividad arrived. Lim presented himself, his police group and the Army CDC contingent: "Here we are, General, reporting as ordered."

"Yes, but where are the tanks?"

"What tanks? Oh, we saw them passing by just a while ago, on their way to Pasig."

"Going to Pasig?" Natividad looked horrified. "But why to Pasig?" These tanks were supposed to have thundered down Edsa to Camp Crame and blasted their way into the rebel camp.

The phone rang. It was First Lady Imelda Marcos. She wanted to speak to the new PC chief. When Natividad returned from that telephone conversation, Lim seized the opportunity to get his men out of the scene. It was 8 p.m. He told Natividad that he and his men had been on duty since morning, without lunch or no rest. Couldn't they be allowed to return to Camp Sikatuna for supper, a bath and some rest?

Natividad granted the request and Lim returned to headquarters with his men.

To get back to Sikatuna, they had to detour through Libis. Edsa had become impassable, barricaded by over 100,000 human bodies.

By Monday and Tuesday, Edsa had become a veritable human blockade: People Power! But People Power could have been aborted on the first two days of the uprising. What Marcos didn't know was that it was not aborted because his own G-men, headed by the police superintendent in charge of the Edsa area, sabotaged the operation.

On Tuesday, Feb. 25, at 6 p.m., Lim entered Camp Crame with all his men. Ramos welcomed his police allies: "Gentlemen, thank you for coming here and supporting us. But during one of the crisis moments last Sunday, when the order to disperse was given, I contacted Fred Lim. And without much ado, he evaded that dispersal order. Fred, thank you very much. And thanks again to all you gentlemen."

Three hours later, the news came that Marcos and his family and cronies had been flown out of Malacañang on their way to exile. Cory Aquino was the new president.

P.S.: There is a taped interview with Lim at about the same time these events happened. Lim recounted the same events during that interview. It should be shown on TV.

Welcome mat

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

WHAT A CROCK OF BULL THAT WAS ABOUT another round of People Power in this country no longer being welcome to the world.

The first Edsa was welcome, said GMA on the occasion of an event whose repetition brought her to power, and the second one was barely tolerated. A third would be scorned. "The world will not forgive another Edsa but would instead condemn the Philippines as a country whose political system is hopelessly unstable and the Filipinos as among the finest people in the world but who always shoot themselves in the foot."

What breathtaking ungratefulness. Filipinos like to shoot themselves in the foot? Not at all. Some of them merely like to bite the hand that fed them. You would imagine that the one person who was carried on the shoulders of others to the finish line would be more appreciative of the effort. But, no, how easily this one forgets, or likes to remember wrongly. If you need further proof GMA was never part of Edsa, 1 or 2, but merely its side effect, albeit a most lethal one, you need look no further.

At the very least she mistakes Edsa for herself: The world did not barely tolerate Edsa 2, the world barely tolerated her. Unlike Cory Aquino, who was the heart and soul of Edsa 1, Gloria was just the skin and Vicky Belo nose of Edsa II. Each time I hear the notion that Filipinos are so "personalistic" that they need a face to launch a thousand sheep into the streets, I disagree violently. Edsa 2 did not need a face to happen. It happened not because of, but in spite of, GMA. It happened because of the power of an idea, or a hope, that the country had been given a new lease on life and things could get better.

The world will always welcome a struggle against tyranny, whether it is called People Power or not, whether it is bloodless or not, whether it resonates with song and dance or with sobs and lamentations for the heroic dead. The world will never have its fill of it. The democratic world in particular will always welcome a struggle against dictatorship, against rulers who seize power and rule without a mandate, against rulers who string out rolls of barbed wire across their nations and raise monuments to themselves with a pile of bleached bones.

I'll tell you what the world will not welcome. The world will not welcome people who steal the vote. I know that for a fact because I've heard a lot of Filipinos tell of being asked abroad, "Didn't your President cheat in the last elections? So why is she the President of your country?" It's enough to make you ashamed to be a Filipino. (I was about to say, it's enough to make you want to change your citizenship overnight, but Filipinos do not need any great incentive in that regard.)

I'll tell you what the world will welcome even less. That is a people who tolerate people who steal the vote. What did they say during Marcos' time? The Philippines is a country inhabited by one SOB and 65 million cowards. The only thing that has changed today is the number of cowards: it is now 85 million. What the world will find contemptible is not a country reeling under an unstable system but a people reeling under a very stable iron fist and loving every minute of it. What the world will find scornful are not a people perpetually demanding to change the world but a people perpetually begging to be whipped—and not while in the throes of kinky sex. What the world will find laughable are not a people that like shooting themselves in the foot but a people that do not like to shoot their tyrants in the head, metaphorically or otherwise.

But far more than this, who cares what the world will welcome or not? The remarks above merely indicate a frame of mind that is obsessed with PR or spinning things. Or a behavior pattern conditioned by what others might think and not by what one ought to do. Which is what GMA's rule has been from the start—image and spin.

In fact, what the world will welcome is not a country that keeps wondering what the world will welcome or not. What the world will welcome is a country that simply does well by its people. What the world will welcome is not a government that preens airily before the world. What the world will welcome is a government that answers humbly to its citizens. What the world will welcome is not the spectacle of a people desperately trying to impress the world as though they were judges of "American Idol." What the world will welcome is the sight of a people struggling heroically to free themselves from their chains.

Martin Luther King did not impress the world by spending his time trying to impress the world. He did so by spending his time telling the black people of his country he had a dream and living—and dying—to fulfill it for them. Nelson Mandela did not become a world figure by spending his time trying to become a world figure. He became so by spending his time (for the most part in jail) fighting to rid his country of the blight known as apartheid. Mikhail Gorbachev did not stride across the world like a colossus by trying to stride across the world like one. He became so by parting the Iron Curtain with a blast of breath known as *perestroika*.

We did not leap onto the world stage in 1986 by singing "Handog ng Pilipino sa Mundo" or even contemplating the thought when we massed at the camps. We did so by waking from our stupor, shouting "*Tama na. Sobra na. Palitan na,*" and moving our asses to overthrow a tyrant.

The world will always welcome the efforts of people to do the right thing. It will ignore, never mind scorn, the efforts of Lupita Kashiwahara to make her patroness look good. Or put much simpler: The world will always love the genuine article.

It will always hate fakes.

Strong parting shot

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

WHEN PHILIP ALSTON, THE UNITED NATIONS special rapporteur on human rights, ended last week his 10-day mission to inquire into extrajudicial killings in the country, he created a political tempest. He delivered a strong parting shot asking the Philippine government and military to acknowledge that the murders were taking place.

Holding the authorities accountable for the killings, Alston, in a pre-departure press conference, said: "I would like a statement from the very top, from the President, secretary of defense and certainly from the (Armed Forces) chief of staff saying that extrajudicial killings will not be tolerated."

He also said: "The AFP remains in a state of almost total denial of its need to respond effectively and authentically to the significant number of killings which have been convincingly attributed to them."

Turning to the responsibility of President Macapagal-Arroyo, the commander in chief of the Armed Forces, Alston said: "The President needs to persuade the military that its reputation and effectiveness will be considerably enhanced, rather than undermined, by acknowledging the facts and taking genuine steps to investigate."

Alston left a strongly worded press statement, representing his preliminary report to the UN on the findings of his mission. It was so scathing it left a heavy political fallout and elevated the killings to a major issue in the mid-term elections in May and raised the possibility of UN and European Union sanctions on the Philippines for its human rights abuses.

The Alston statement was followed by the release to the public of the long-withheld report of the Melo Commission, formed by President Arroyo, "to get to the bottom of why these extralegal killings are taking place and who probably are responsible."

The findings of Alston and the Melo Commission emphasize one point: the accountability of the government and the military for the killings. But Alston was harsher than Melo in holding the government and the military responsible for the murders that have killed at least 800 political activists since 2001. He went as far as demanding a categorical statement from the President and military authorities that they would not tolerate extrajudicial killings.

The Melo report said: "There is some circumstantial evidence to support the proposition that some elements within or with connection to the military are responsible for the killings." In a swipe at the President and the highest military authorities, the report said: "While the killings are certainly not attributable to the military organization itself, or the state, but only to individuals or groups acting in pursuant to their own interests, this does not mean that the state can sit idly by and refuse to act. Ultimately, the state has the responsibility of protecting its citizens and making sure that their fundamental liberties are respected."

Pointing out the implications of the unabated killings for raising these as an international human rights issue, the Melo report said: "The growing worldwide consensus for state responsibility for non-state acts posits that if the state fails to investigate, prosecute or redress private, non-state acts in violation of fundamental liberties, it is in effect aiding the perpetrators of such violations, for which it could be held responsible under international law."

The most damning finding of the Melo report was on retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan, who has been accused by human rights groups as the "butcher" in the killings. The report said: "From the evidence gathered, and after an extensive study…the commission comes to the conclusion that there is no direct evidence, but only circumstantial evidence, linking some elements in the military to the killings… There is no officially sanctioned policy on the part of the military or its civilian superiors to resort to what other countries euphemistically call 'alternative procedures'—meaning illegal liquidations. However, there is certainly evidence pointing the finger of suspicion at some elements and personalities in the Armed Forces, in particular General Palparan, as responsible for an undetermined number of killings, by allowing, tolerating and even encouraging the killings."

Responding to accusations from right-wing administration supporters, including Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, who is ironically chair of the Senate committee on human rights, Alston made clear in his report: "I have spent the past 10 days in the Philippines at the invitation of the government to inquire into the phenomenon of extrajudicial executions."

The President has also invited the European Union to assist in the investigation, after her government came under strong pressure from the EU to put an end to the killings and prosecute the perpetrators. The EU has warned that the Philippines faces sanctions, including cuts in technical and economic aid if the killings are not stopped. Alston clarified that "my formal role is to report to the UN Human Rights Council on the situation I have found."

His findings provoked a barrage of insults from Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez who called him just a "*muchacho*" of the UN, and military officials who ridiculed him for making sweeping conclusions after staying for only 10 days in the country.

The best answer to these reactions is that they should read the full text of Alston's statement. This goes to the forum of international opinion, which is what matters.

Then we can wait for the backlash from the UN and EU. The electoral backlash in the country could also be a political tornado.

Inconvenient truths

AN OSCAR AWARD FOR A FORMER US VICE PRESIDENT? That's what happened the other night, when "An Inconvenient Truth" won an Oscar for the best documentary. Technically, it was director Davis Guggenheim who won, but he handed the Oscar to Al Gore, the former vice president, who first produced the documentary. The film also won a best song award for Melissa Etheridge, who sang the film's musical theme, "I Need to Wake Up."

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

The documentary has reached the Philippines, and it has been shown in theaters and schools. I hear pirated copies are already circulating. But we probably have a long way to go yet to get more people aware of what climate change is. The INQUIRER has produced some excellent materials on climate change, but I thought of adding more, and focusing on a less known issue: the politics behind climate change and how ideology was able to suppress science for many years.

Climate change

To understand what's going on, let me try to translate the scientific jargon around climate change.

Just last month, the United Nations convened an international meeting and announced that the scientific evidence for climate change was unequivocal. The announcement made the front pages throughout the world, together with dire warnings on what Gore has called a "planetary emergency."

Yet, somehow, I think climate change is still a problematic term because it seems so lame. After all, the weather changes constantly, and from our high school science subjects, we all know that the planet has gone through major climate changes in the past, several Ice Ages for example. So what's the big deal about another climate change?

What's alarming is that the current climate change is anthropogenic, a fancy word that means "made by humans." This is the first anthropogenic climate change that has happened and it is going on on a scale that has already triggered a series of adverse consequences.

Life on the planet is possible because of the way we interact with the sun. Solar energy enters the atmosphere and heats up the earth, and some of this energy is eventually radiated back into space. There's a delicate balance here: if we reradiate too much energy back into space, it would be too cold to sustain life; if we keep too much of the solar radiation, it would be too hot.

Human activities, especially in the last 200 years or so, have thickened the atmosphere, mainly by accumulating gases that we spew out—mainly carbon dioxide from our burning of fossil fuels from our homes, cars and factories, as well as other gases such as methane (from activities like livestock farming and fossil fuel burning) and nitrous oxide (from fertilizers, fossil fuels and burning of forests and crop residues).

The results of global warming are already visible, the most obvious ones being heat waves and droughts. But there are other long-term consequences that interact with each other. For example, as oceans become warmer, the top layer sets off more energy, resulting in more frequent storms. Warmer water also holds more moisture, so the storms are more powerful, and more likely to cause flooding. We've certainly seen this in our part of the world, while the ferocity of hurricane "Katrina" in New Orleans helped make Americans realize what could happen in the future.

Global warming has its paradoxes. While some parts of the world see more flooding, others suffer from drought and desertification because rainfall patterns are disrupted and high temperatures result in more soil moisture evaporation.

Scientists have warned about many other problems resulting from global warming, from the bleaching and death of coral reefs to the emergence of "tropical" diseases in cold countries.

Denial river

When the experts declared last month that climate change was real, they cited evidence from voluminous studies that pored over everything, from historical records in China to weather bureau measurements of rainfall and temperature throughout the world. Yet conservatives, like the American Enterprise Institute, continued to argue that all this is alarmist. One British commentator called it "climate porn."

Gore, in his book, pokes fun at these conservatives by quoting Mark Twain: "Denial ain't just a river in Egypt," a play on the way American southerners pronounce "denial" like "The Nile."

But yes, denial from the likes of George W. Bush can be as powerful as the Nile. Gore minces no words when he writes: "One prominent source of disinformation on global warming has been the Bush-Cheney White House." He goes on to describe how the US government tried to silence scientists who were warning about climate change. In 2001, Bush put lawyer Phillip Cooney in charge of environmental policy in the White House. Before he took that job, Cooney had worked for the American Petroleum Institute, taking care of an industry-funded campaign to discredit the global warming arguments.

On June 21, 2004, 48 Nobel Prize winners signed a statement accusing the Bush administration of distorting science to avoid facing up to climate change.

Why are conservatives so riled up about global warming? Mainly because they see the climate change issue as an attack on capitalism. After all, it is in the last two centuries, as capitalism developed, that we did so much harm to the atmosphere. And even for those who accept that there have been some undesirable consequences, capitalism will provide the answer. It's a line Bush subscribes to, and the reason the US government did not sign the Kyoto Protocol a few years back, an international agreement where countries pledged to cut back on gas emissions. A statement from Bush in 2002 captures his sentiment with his suggestions on how climate change could be dealt with: "harness the power of markets, the creativity of entrepreneurs, and draw upon the best scientific research."

It's not surprising that these same conservatives often argue that there is no population problem. People are seen as resources, as consumers that allow malls and shopping centers to flourish. Locally, a variation we hear is that people are exportable, bringing in valuable foreign exchange. Let people reproduce as they wish and capitalism will take care of all of them.

This extreme ideological view of capitalism is prone to denial and to distorting science. When faced with figures linking population growth to poverty, poor health and environmental degradation, we get arguments like: "Did you know we can fit the entire population of the Philippines into Bohol?" or "But we will run out of people if we practice family planning. Who will then take care of our elderly?"

Whether climate change or population problem (and the two are so closely related), those who refuse to see, will not see. What's so horrifying is knowing that entire countries, like the United States and the Philippines, are (mis)governed by leaders who prefer to live in denial when it's more convenient than facing up to the truth.

Visit climatecrisis.net for more teaching and learning resources around climate change.

Etiquette for candidates

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

ONE OF THE FIRST LESSONS IN CAMPAIGNING that I learned, I learned from Katrina Legarda, in the midst of our first campaign for Abanse! Pinay.

We were onstage at a rally in Bacolod City, and we were sweltering in the summer sun, having just driven around Bacolod before mounting the stage. I was dying of thirst and decided, before the speeches started, to get down the stage and cross the street to the Jollibee outlet and buy bottled water for everybody. When I got back onstage and started handing everyone a bottle of water, Katrina glared at me and said through gritted teeth: "Don't you know you're not supposed to drink water in front of a rally crowd?"

I looked at the crowd that had been standing in the hot sun. It was only then that I realized that if you ask people to come to your rally, brave the heat and congestion, and then listen to your spiels, the least you could do is try to, in the jargon of self-help books, "share their pain." If folks in your crowd are going to be sweating and thirsting, you can at least go through the same inconvenience, and not make them feel worse by slaking your thirst in front of them.

These are lessons you learn the hard way—by way of experience, that is, by actually campaigning, even if you are not yourself running for office. But since we're in the midst of campaign season—with congressional and local candidates set to jump into the fray soon—I thought it would be a good time to help first-time candidates with these tips on campaign "etiquette." I know I'm not exactly an authority on this, so I invite veteran campaign managers and candidates (victorious or vanquished) to chime in with their own tips. For now, here goes:

* * *

• BONE up on the audience you'll be addressing before you dare ask for their votes. I've listened to candidates who were so out of it they didn't even know where they were, much less what sort of people were in their audience. Candidates could at the very least ask what concerns are uppermost in the minds of the people they'll be talking to, and try to give even token acknowledgment of these issues. Of course, there are those who believe that all they need to do is flash a bright smile, trot out some dancers and play a catchy tune. These help, of course, but people do like to feel you are talking to them directly, and care enough about them to listen and learn.

• Follow rules you helped make. I'm so shocked at how legislators running for re-election are so willing come campaign season to violate, if not ignore completely, election rules and regulations that they helped pass into law. Every candidate knows about the ban on indiscriminate posting of campaign materials and the requirement to confine their posters to Comelec-designated common areas. And yet, we see posters, banners and tarpaulin hanging everywhere, including some that are nailed on living trees, and blighting the landscape. Even party-list groups, despite their claims to being idealistic and cause-oriented, see nothing wrong in flouting the rules and ruining the environment.

Voters should take note of the most flagrant violators of campaign laws and resolve to withhold their votes from them. If even now, when they are still courting our favors, they think nothing of breaking the law, think what transactions they're capable of once they find themselves in power.

* * *

• DON'T gate-crash celebrations that have nothing to do with you. A columnist for another paper has written about the sights and sounds at the recent Panagbenga Festival in Baguio, where senatorial candidates from the administration party led the parade of floats and disrupted the otherwise festive occasion by throwing T-shirts and candies at the crowd, and watching in glee as the people scrambled for these little favors. Michael Defensor, meanwhile, brought up the rear, mounted on a horse, while Prospero Pichay did him one better by waving from up high in a helicopter.

It's bad enough that floats in the Panagbenga, touted as the local equivalent of the Rose Parade, have been grossly commercialized. But politicized, too? What were the organizers thinking? What were the candidates thinking? And weren't the tourists turned off by such crass proceedings?

• Don't ride on other people's popularity just to promote your own name-recognition. We all know about senators who finally made it to the chamber by way of associating themselves with popular entertainment figures—to the extent of registering the actors' names as a "nickname," in case voters confused them with the celebrity endorser. When Manny Pacquiao announced that he was abandoning his political plans, someone commented that candidates would now be rushing to his side, eager for an endorsement or at the very least, a picture beside him. True enough, a political clan in Manila lost no time talking to the media about him, even claiming credit for changing the boxer's mind.

* * *

• DO try to stand on your own achievements and your personal qualifications, and don't rely on your name, your family and their legacy to boost your candidacy. Of course, you, more than anyone else, have the right to cite this family connection. But really, voters, especially young voters, don't care a whit about your family tree, if you are but an untried sapling. I hope that before you decided to join the fray, you had already accumulated enough credentials on your own, and had formulated a platform for governance and legislation for which you would be personally responsible, and to which voters would hold you accountable. You can fool enough voters with your familiar-sounding surname, but if you don't honor this name with your own achievements, it would count for nothing.

Celebrities, heroines and accessory doggies

COMMENTARY

Isabel T. Escoda

RECENTLY I MAILED A RELATIVE IN THE UNITED States a clipping from the prestigious London newspaper, the Financial Times, featuring an item titled "Power Dressing" about Imelda Marcos' launch of her jewelry and accessories line, in which she describes herself as "Imeldific." My cousin e-mailed me with the remark: "It's really more 'Imeldiculous'!" And she asked, "Why does the international press keep giving publicity to someone with a high cringe factor who mainly produces widespread sniggering at home and abroad?"

I replied that the media seem to like trotting out Imelda whenever they need to produce disbelief or disgust, guffaws or grinding teeth, or all of these things. And I added that the Madam obviously revels in all types of publicity, oblivious of any reflections of buffoonery.

All this set off a train of thought regarding other notorious women who have likewise provided colorful copy for the media. There was Evita, the late Argentinian dictator Juan Peron's wife, whose demagoguery was legendary; the Vietnamese Madame Nhu, labeled "The Dragon Lady" by the Western press during her brother-in-law Ngo Dinh Diem's regime, who famously dismissed Buddhist monks as "barbecues" when they immolated themselves to protest her family's corruption; and the Japanese-born Dewi who became Indonesian dictator Sukarno's wife and later filled women's magazines with tales of her jetsetting romances (and her altercation with our own high-flying socialite, Minnie Osmeña).

Indeed, the aging Imelda's antics rank with all those and seem destined to fill newspaper and magazine feature and entertainment pages ad nauseum. Meanwhile there doesn't seem to be much interest in reports about such sterling persons as Burma's redoubtable Aung Saan Suu Kyi (known as "Asia's Nelson Mandela" for her long incarceration by her country's dictators), Iran's gutsy feminist Shirin Ebadi, Kenya's environmentalist Wangari Maahtai (dubbed "The Mother of Trees"), and Guatemalan activist Rigoberta Menchu—all of them Nobel Prize winners. Perversely, publicity for them has been sporadic even though they have had tremendously positive impacts on their countries and have earned much international admiration and acclaim.

Just as perversely, in Imelda's own country, the women who should be getting more publicity—the migrant workers slaving overseas—rate only occasional feature articles. All the intrepid Pinays whose struggles began when Imelda's husband succeeded in impoverishing his country don't seem to make as interesting copy—or if they do, their stories are relegated to the less important sections of the media. This may be because the victimization of so many of our overseas Filipino workers seems to be a topic considered rather boring by a jaded public, long tired of reports about abuse and discrimination, hence the preference for focusing on stories about airheaded celebrities and assorted weirdos, which is why the media dish them out.

This is apparently why Imelda's latest venture (producing supposedly affordable jewelry and accessories for her country's middle class) merits mention in the foreign media. Did the Financial Times devote space to her in its fashion section to highlight the irony of her apparently iconic status amid her country's continuing poverty? Or was it its way of highlighting the decadence of the former and present ruling class in developing countries like the Philippines?

"Power Dressing" is a part of the "Weekend" supplement which features international personalities, like business people, actors, models and various movers and shakers (dubious and otherwise). The section mainly quotes the person featured, hence the airing of Imelda's memorable sayings which Pinoys have heard countless times: "…my positive attitude (sees) beauty in everything. I'm allergic to ugliness…the only democracy 'in the world is God and God is beauty made real."

She discusses her wardrobe which is custom-made: "I can't afford to buy expensive clothes and certainly cannot afford couture."

Regarding the jewelry from her present collection, she says: "We are selling beauty and, of course, God and love. To be 'Imeldific' is to unleash the beautiful in you."

The jewelry and accessories she wears in a photograph are listed: the pin bearing a Philippine flag, her ring (given by her late husband) composed of a colorless stone set in gold which she describes as "not important but a reminder to me that someone loves me beyond eternity"), a Bvlgari watch and an Asprey scarf. She proudly proclaims her shoes are made in Marikina, remarking, "These days technology is so advanced one can't tell the real from the fake. It just shows that the world is getting poorer and poorer."

Her last accessory is Venus the dog (the chihuahua in the photograph is being carried by her) wearing a rhinestone cascade necklace and lime-green sequined wings on his ears, decorated with emerald paste stones hand-made by Imelda. "She's only a dog," she declares, "but she's already Imeldific… Being Imeldific is the Filipino nature."

Finally her historical memory completes the piece: "Mao surrendered to beauty. He said, 'What I love about Imelda is that she is so natural, and that is perfection.' That for me is the highest compliment."

There it is. How can any stories about Marisa from Davao being maltreated by her racist employer in Kowloon, or Araceli from Bulacan being browbeaten by her sadistic mistress in Singapore, or Robilyn from Ilocos Norte slaving at a battery factory in Taiwan compete with that?

Obviously what sells better in the media are features like the one my cousin has termed "Imeldiculous."

Isabel T. Escoda has written about Filipinos in Hong Kong in her books, "Letters from Hong Kong," "Hong Kong Postscript" and "Pinoy Abroad," her latest.

Gonzalez's statements clearly show gov't in denial of killings

JUSTICE SECRETARY RAUL GONzalez's statements downplaying the initial findings of Philip Alston, special rapporteur for the UN Commission on Human Rights, give little hope for the families of journalists and political activists slain in the country to find justice.

Ironically, the statements also reflect with greater clarity Alston's perception that the government is "in denial" of the existing problem of military involvement in these extrajudicial killings. To quote Alston, "The AFP remains in a state of almost total denial of its need to respond effectively and authentically to the significant number of killings convincingly attributed to them. The President needs to persuade the military that its reputation and effectiveness will be considerably enhanced, rather than undermined, by acknowledging the facts and taking genuine steps to investigate."

The undersigned faculty members of the University of the Philippines-College of Mass Communication express grave concern over the attitude of the justice secretary toward Alston's recommendations, even as extrajudicial killings have claimed hundreds of lives, including 29 journalists who were killed in the line of duty during the Arroyo administration alone.

We are equally alarmed by the fact that in at least 26 percent of the cases involving journalists, police and military personnel were identified as the primary suspects.

Just last week, another journalist was killed in Sultan Kudarat. Hernani Pastolero of Lightning Courier was the first journalist to be killed in the year 2007. Pastolero was the second journalist to be killed in Sultan Kudarat after the March 24, 2005 killing of Marlene Esperat, columnist of The Midland Review, who was exposing corruption in the local government. Does government want the Philippines to be dubbed as the "most dangerous place for journalists outside a war zone" for a third year in a row?

We welcome the President's move toward greater transparency with her promise to release the Melo Report. But, we call on her to heed the more serious recommendations of Alston and to take more progressive steps in seeking an end to these killings, and find real solutions to solving these crimes.

—10 FACULTY MEMBERS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES COLLEGE OF MASS COMMUNICATION (UP CMC) LED BY DEAN ELENA E. PERNIA

LETTERS

Southeast Asia's first woman atop Everest

SORRY TO DISAPPOINT RINA Jimenez-David, but should one of the three female climbers of the First Philippine Mt. Everest Expedition reach the summit, she will not be the first woman from Southeast Asia to do so. (INQUIRER, 12/1/06)

According to the Himalayan Database published by the American Alpine Club, Miss Clara Sumawati (1967), a psychology teacher from Jakarta, reached the summit on Sept. 26, 1996 at 11 a.m., from the north side.

—WILLY BLASER,
willyblaser@hotmail.com

Grandmothers should be respected

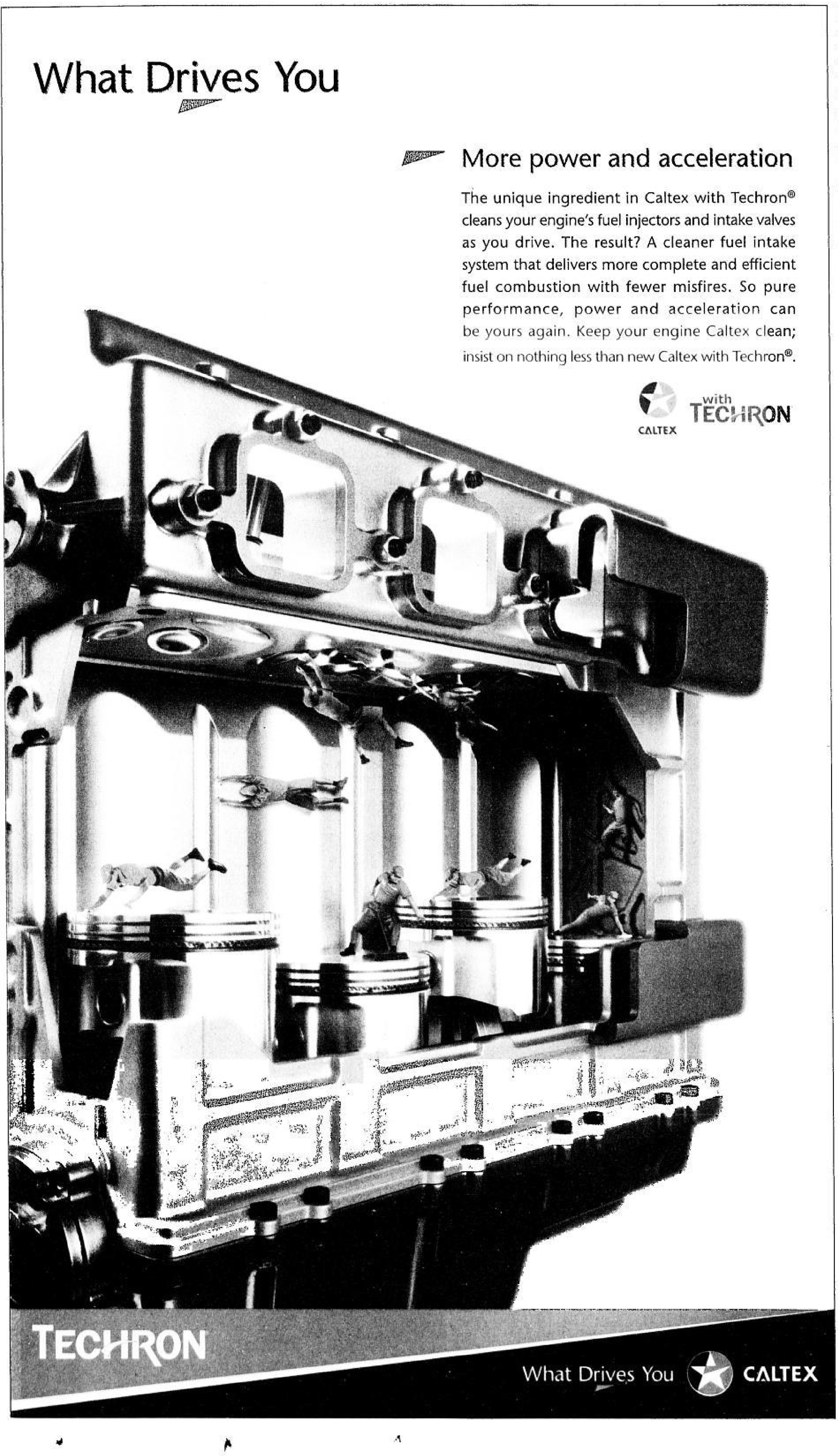
ONE EVENING, SOME WEEKS ago, I was tuned in to a newscast on a Filipino cable TV. One of the leading stories was a beauty pageant. I initially thought nothing of it. We have watched many beauty pageants on television year after year (or is it month after month?). This one was a bit shocking. It was a beauty pageant of grandmothers, *lolas* if you will, held in one of the major towns in the Philippines.

The *lolas* were made to parade in bathing suits. Apparently, a few of them did not have bathing suits, so they were made to wear skimpy materials that almost seemed from my vantage point like underwear. The majority of the audience could be seen laughing and ridiculing this spectacle, which to me was sad. It was despicable beyond belief. It certainly didn't speak well of the project's organizers or the TV station's news editors. But then, ratings (read: money) are always the deciding factor in lousy decisions.

Family is an important part of our culture. In Filipino culture, calling someone a grandmother or *lola* is a sign of respect. Unlike in the Western world, which is hung up on the idea that getting old is a negative thing, in the Philippines, age comes with honor.

Grandmothers are the backbone of the Filipino community. They have been witness to countless events. They have toiled in ways that we will never know. They have been a comfort through some of life's most challenging times. They are the ones who have shared the most in the sadness and joys of their people and families. They are the ones who can tell stories that are not passed down in history books. I don't know who came up with the word "grandmother," but I guess it's because she is both grand and a mother to us. *Lola* is such a special person. She deserves better.

—BUNNY ARVILLE,
rarville@cox.net


What Drives You

More power and acceleration

The unique ingredient in Caltex with Techron® cleans your engine's fuel injectors and intake valves as you drive. The result? A cleaner fuel intake system that delivers more complete and efficient fuel combustion with fewer misfires. So pure performance, power and acceleration can be yours again. Keep your engine Caltex clean; insist on nothing less than new Caltex with Techron®.

CALTEX with TECHRON

TECHRON

What Drives You CALTEX

NFA's privatization is not sound strategy

THIS IS IN REFERENCE TO THE NEWS ITEM, "With P22B in deficit, NFA is biggest loser in gov't." (INQUIRER, 1/24/07)

According to the report, Finance Secretary Margarito Teves reportedly wants to privatize the marketing function of the National Food Authority, thus leaving the agency with just its regulatory function.

The news item also cited DOF (Department of Finance) data showing NFA's deficit of P4 billion in 2003. The fact is, NFA's huge deficit, incurred from 2004 up to the present, represents the cost of the increasing volume of rice imports which were brought into the country with the DOF's approval; and the tariff charges imposed by the DOF on NFA's importations. From 1972 up to 2002, NFA's rice importations were tariff-free.

NFA's record shows that of the P21.2 billion (so-called) deficit last year, 40 percent (P8 billion) represented tariff charges plus bank interests. Here's the cruel fact: NFA pays the charges to the Bureau of Customs, an attached agency of the DOF. So while the NFA bleeds, the BOC gets fat. Being a member of the NFA Council, the finance secretary is fully aware of these huge imports and corresponding tariff charges. Besides, the loans the NFA uses to pay its importations and tariffs are approved by the DOF. It is, therefore, unfair for the DOF to commend the BOC for its higher collection performance while faulting the NFA for its losses.

As to NFA's losses, it should be emphasized that the agency's mandate is to stabilize the price and supply of food grains in the market during normal situations and calamities. For this purpose, the government should have a strong rice intervention mechanism, more so, in a country like ours, where more than the majority of the people are poor. Otherwise, the supply and price of the staple food will become vulnerable to the machinations of unscrupulous, profit-greedy private sector, as shown in the 1995 rice crisis.

For farmers, the NFA ensures a fair return of investment; and for consumers, a steady supply of accessible, good quality rice which are affordable at NFA-subsidized prices. Thus, the NFA's losses are an inevitable consequence of the NFA's mandate to stabilize grains price and supply and should be considered social cost.

In this context, the privatization of the NFA's marketing functions is not a fitting approach to cut government losses. It will only pry control of grains price and supply from the hands of government. This could lead to widespread anarchy and social disaster of immeasurable loss and cost.

The NFA's privatization may improve the agency's cash position but it will definitely deliver the profitable rice business to the private sector. The present NFA structure is still the best setup for an effective food agency in the Philippines.

—ROMAN M. SANCHEZ,
national president,
National Food Authority Employees
Association (NFA-EA) Courage,
North Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City

Delightful climate change

WHAT A DELIGHTFUL CHANGE OF WEATHER and outlook Jess Abrera's cartoon brought into readers' homes by way of last Feb. 4's issue of the INQUIRER.

The family, that blessed institution, has been taking such a beating from the prophets of doom, death advocates and a growing variety of behavioral deviants. We thank the INQUIRER for celebrating life—in its fruitful, natural diversity, in its fulsome praise of God's creative energies.

God bless us all, and again, many thanks to the INQUIRER for sharing the vision.

—M.A. ESQUIVEL,
60 Vienna St., Merville Park,
Parañaque City 1709

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Power rates ordered cut

From page A1

the US dollar, according to the ERC.

An opposition senatorial candidate said the ERC order could be aimed at wooing voters into supporting administration candidates.

"There's some electioneering but at the end of the day, the people will benefit from it," Francis Escudero, a senatorial candidate of the Genuine Opposition, said.

But Sergio Apostol, the chief presidential legal counsel, said "there's no politics involved" in the ERC order.

The ERC, not Malacañang, has jurisdiction over power rate adjustments, according to Apostol.

Blame gov't for delay

Opposition reelectionist Sen. Panfilo Lacson said the reduction in power rates should have been ordered much earlier due to the sliding oil prices in the world market and the peso's strengthening against the dollar.

"The administration should be blamed for the delay instead of claiming credit for it," he said.

Senate President Manuel Villar, who is running as a GO guest candidate, did not question the timing of the ERC order.

"Like every Pinoy, we welcome the reduction in power rates. This will lessen the burden on many of our countrymen," he said.

Effective February-March

In a statement, ERC Chair Rodolfo Albano said the new rates would be reflected in Napocor customers' bills starting the billing period Feb. 26 to March 25.

Consumers—whether residential, commercial or industrial—in the Visayas will enjoy the largest rate cut of 31.5 centavos per kWh while those in Luzon and Mindanao will enjoy cuts of 4.3 centavos and 0.45 centavo, respectively.

The cuts will be passed on to end-users but officials of Meralco, Napocor's biggest customer, said it would take much longer for consumers to feel the effects of the cuts.

The officials said Meralco used to automatically implement corresponding rate changes when Napocor adjusted its own, as was the practice among distributors and electric cooperatives.

But a Supreme Court decision issued last September disallowed this and required power distributors and cooperatives to seek approval from the ERC first.

The decision stemmed from consumer groups' complaints that Meralco was increasing rates without public hearings and ERC permission.

The reduction will not happen until the company files the necessary petition, which officials said were piling up after the high court's September decision.

"We have filed five petitions for GRAM (Generation Rate Adjustment Mechanism) and Icera (Incremental Currency Exchange Rate Adjustment) since then, but until now two have only been acted upon and only provisionally," the Meralco officials said.

GRAM is a way for power distributors, such as Meralco, to recover from their customers the generation costs charged them by power suppliers like Napocor.

"The lag time between a Napocor rate adjustment and the reflection of this change in end-users' bills was two months," Meralco officials said. "Now it takes five months."

In the February billing period, Meralco's rates reflected actual costs in September 2006.

Albano said the public had been expecting a reduction in rates because the peso was getting stronger against the US dollar.

"However, the (Feb. 7 decisions) do not reflect yet said improvement for it covers earlier billing periods," Albano said.

More reductions

Renato Reyes, secretary general of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, said the reductions were a welcome development for consumers but he lamented that the changes referred to billing periods of more than a year ago.

"There should be more reductions considering the improvement of the peso in the past months," Reyes said.

"How long must we wait to benefit from that?"

Pete Ilagan, president of the National Association of Electricity Consumers for Reforms, said the public had yet to benefit from the noble intentions of the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001.

"These rate adjustments are what is expected because they are the result of differences in what Napocor charged its customers and what electricity actually cost," Ilagan said.

"When will we feel the lowering of power costs that are actually the effects of industry reforms?" he asked.

For its part, the Semiconductor and Electronics Industries of the Philippines welcomed any initiative to lower power costs.

Seipi executive director Ernie Santiago said the group had been pushing for lower costs because this was one of the major concerns of the business sector.

Investors leaving

The high cost of electricity is driving away hundreds of foreign investors from the Philippines, according to utility officials.

Despite surplus generating capacity, the average industrial tariff in the country is 11 cents per kWh, about double that of Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam, according to Oscar Lopez, chief executive officer and chair of Benpres Holdings Corp.

Lopez said last year that an outmoded royalties and tax regime kept power rates high and drove the industry toward imported energy supplies such as coal and oil.

Benpres is the Lopez family's holding firm for generating and other assets that include Meralco and power plants, broadcasting, toll roads, construction, property and electronics.

Evaluation of petitions

Albano said the rate reductions were arrived at after a thorough evaluation of Napocor's petitions.

He was referring to two separate applications Napocor filed on Nov. 27, 2005, seeking permission to adjust effective rates—the basic rate plus the costs related to fluctuations in the currency exchange rates and in the cost of fuel and of electricity generation.

In industry parlance, the added costs are called Icera and GRAM.

In its filings, Napocor asked to be allowed to implement Icera and GRAM to recover costs incurred from November 2005 to January 2006. GRAM covers a three-month period.

In decisions dated Feb. 7, the ERC said Napocor was allowed an Icera of 74.25 centavos per kWh in Luzon, 16.79 centavos in the Visayas and 3.04 centavos in Mindanao.

The regulator also allowed Napocor generation rate changes of 20.34 centavos in Luzon, 1.57 centavos in the Visayas and 45.44 centavos in Mindanao.

Data from the ERC showed that Napocor's basic rate based on time-of-use averages was P3.897 per kWh in Luzon, P2.998 in the Visayas and P2.103 in Mindanao.

ERC Commissioner Rauf A. Tan said the resulting reduction was due to differences between the new Icera and GRAM and the previous ones, which had been in effect since August 2006.

"The practice is that the new figures replace the old numbers while the basic rate remains the same," Tan said. "The basic rate can change through a separate process of seeking approval with the ERC." *With reports from Dona Pazzibugan, Michael Ubac and Norman Bordadora*

Big win for GO seen in Iloilo

By Norman Bordadora

ILOILO CITY—MORE THAN A MONTH AFTER police tried to remove him by force, Iloilo Gov. Niel Tupas vowed to make the Genuine Opposition senatorial slate prevail in his province.

"The Genuine Opposition will win in Iloilo," said Tupas as he presented GO candidate Loren Legarda to local leaders who, he said, would make Legarda the No. 1 senator in Iloilo.

Legarda and another GO candidate, Sorsogon Rep. Francis Escudero, arrived in Iloilo yesterday to kick off the GO campaign in western Visayas. Escudero went on to Roxas City while Legarda visited Iloilo's towns and cities.

Tupas said GO would win in Iloilo despite the influence of Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, a former Iloilo City congressman.

"What is the population of Iloilo City? 200,000. What is the population of the whole province of Iloilo? 800,000. They may have Iloilo City but the rest of the province belongs to the United Opposition," said Tupas, who was joined by his sons, Barotac Viejo Mayor Raul Tupas and Iloilo Board Member Niel Tupas Jr., in welcoming Legarda to the capitol.

Legarda, a former senator, vowed to do more for Iloilo if she is returned to the Senate.

"In 1998, Western Visayas gave me the biggest vote and the biggest margin [and] made me No. 1 senator," Legarda said.

She said she also sympathized with the Tupas family over their recent experience.

Last January, the Office of the Ombudsman ordered the dismissal of the senior Tupas after he was found guilty of malversation of public funds and falsification of public documents. When Tupas refused to leave, police on orders of the interior department assaulted the capitol to forcibly remove him. Niel Jr. suffered bruises when policemen kicked and pushed him.

"[We] must make sure that this violation of human rights must not happen again," Legarda said.

Escudero yesterday challenged the members of the administration's Team Unity to renew their allegiance to the Constitution, saying they were running under an administration that had imposed measures that were found to be unconstitutional.

He said the Supreme Court had ruled that the administration's Executive Order No. 464, Presidential Proclamation No. 1017 and the calibrated preemptive response policy were found by the Supreme Court to be unconstitutional.

Hope's video clip posted on YouTube

By Erwin Oliva
Inquirer.net

THE VIDEO CLIP OF HOPE CENTENO CONfessing her alleged affair with basketball player James Yap, husband of Kris Aquino, has earned a number of honors on YouTube, INQUIRER.net learned.

The former beauty clinic receptionist's exclusive television interviews that were posted on YouTube ranked the 50th most viewed video clip on Feb. 27, 2007.

It garnered a number-one rating in the "Most Discussed" under the Entertainment category in all languages and in the English language, the statistics on the website showed.

The video clip combines television interviews done by show biz-oriented talk show "S Files" aired on GMA News Network, and by Korina Sanchez's "Rated K" show on ABS-CBN.

Other video clips of Centeno have been posted on YouTube and blogs.

A search for "Hope Centeno" on YouTube produced at least five more video clips, most of which were taken from television shows.

Centeno alleged she had a 10-month affair with Yap.

Yap has denied having sexual relations with Centeno but admitted having an affair with the controversial clinic receptionist.

James benched; Kris goes …

From page A1

affair with Yap and may even be pregnant.

Abad said it was Noynoy who suggested that Yap no longer bother campaigning for him and instead worked to salvage his marriage.

Abad, former congressman for Batanes, however, wss confident the scandal in the marriage of his celebrity sister would boost more than hurt Noynoy's senatorial bid.

"Martyr *ang dating ni Kristeta,* the public sympathy will be with her," according to Abad.

"The more they mention the name Aquino, (the more it will help Noynoy)," Abad said.

The popular talk show host and youngest daughter of former President Corazon Aquino had made no bones about publicly baring details of her colorful love life in the past.

Kris, seven months pregnant with her first child with Yap, has agreed to endorse her brother through political ads.

Kris' endorsement would still work wonders for her brother, Abad predicted.

Failing marriage appealing

"Kris has been honest and transparent about it. And the whole idea of a failing marriage is appealing to people because we are pro-institution, we are pro-marriage," said Abad, vice president of the Liberal Party wing chaired by Sen. Franklin Drilon who is fully backing Noynoy's candidacy.

Abad said Noynoy's political ad featuring Kris is due to air on television within a week.

He said in the ad, the more popular Kris will be telling voters to vote for her low-key brother, with a line that goes like this: "This is not about Kris … This is about Noynoy running" for the Senate. Kris would then tell viewers that she was often at odds with her brother but she has realized he only wanted to protect her in accordance with the wishes of their father. "*Sanay na kayo na bida si Kris* (I'm used to being the star)," she will say, urging voters to make her brother the hero this time.

Kris had earlier said that since her pregnancy would not permit her to campaign, her husband would be joining Noynoy in her behalf.

Settle domestic problem

"Obviously, James cannot campaign because they have to settle their own domestic problems. But I'm sure when this hullabaloo is over, (he can campaign)," Abad said.

"This (Kris-James marriage) is more important than my campaign," Abad quoted Noynoy as saying.

Abad said what they know about the couple's problem is only what they have seen on television.

He appealed to people to give the couple space to iron out their problem.

"Let us allow them to settle this problem, this is their marriage and they are responsible people," Abad said.

Erap writes 'ASO Jingle' for 3 ex-allies

From page A1

source told the INQUIRER.

Sotto doubted that Estrada composed the jingle.

"I don't really react to this kind of low level of campaigning, but thank you [for the plugging] nevertheless," said Sotto, a composer and TV host.

During the parlor games at the GO proclamation rally, hosts Tia Pusit and Inday Garutay asked two contestants on stage to listen to the song and guess what "ASO" stood for.

Each contestant shouted, "Angara, Sotto and Oreta," and the hosts and the crowd cheered.

CDs for distribution

CDs of the ASO jingle have been made for distribution, according to the INQUIRER source.

Angara was Estrada's running mate in the 1998 presidential election. He served as executive secretary toward the end of Estrada's presidency.

Angara's decision to run in the administration's Team Unity slate, however, did not surprise observers as much as the decision of Sotto and Oreta, who were known close allies of Estrada.

Sotto and Oreta, who were sitting senators during Estrada's impeachment trial, fiercely defended the former President from corruption and plunder charges.

But the two joined the administration's Team Unity ticket when it became clear they would not be included in the opposition slate.

ESTRADA: Don't waste your votes if they will just go to the dogs. INQUIRER PHOTO

In the song, interpreted by a woman, Estrada referred to his three allies as dogs "who do not bark or run, but just wait for a bribe."

Dogs that don't bark

He called them "balimbing," a many-sided fruit that has become synonymous with political turncoats.

Estrada's jingle goes:

"How much is that doggie in the window?/ *At anong klaseng aso ba ito?/ Ewan ko, sila ang tanungin niyo/ Bakit sila naging aso.*

"Magkano ba ang aso sa Senado? Iboboto niyo ba mga ito?/ Sayang lang ang inyong mga boto/ Kung mapupunta lang sa aso.

"Bawal ang aso sa Senado/ Ibang klaseng aso kasi ito/ Hindi tumatahol o nanghahabol/ Naghihintay lang ng suhol.

"Balimbing ang 'ngalan ng aming aso/ Hindi siya kumakain ng buto/ Balimbing ang kanyang paborito/ Kaya siya'y balimbing na aso.

(How much is that doggie in the window? And what kind of dog is this? I don't know, ask them why they turned into dogs.

How much is a dog in the Senate? Will you be voting for them? Your votes will go to waste, if they will go to the dogs.

Dogs are not allowed in the Senate. Because this is a different kind of dog. It does not bark or run. It just waits for a bribe.

Turncoats, that is what our dogs are called. They do not eat bones. Their favorite food is *balimbing.* That's why they're *balimbing* dogs.)

Still powerful

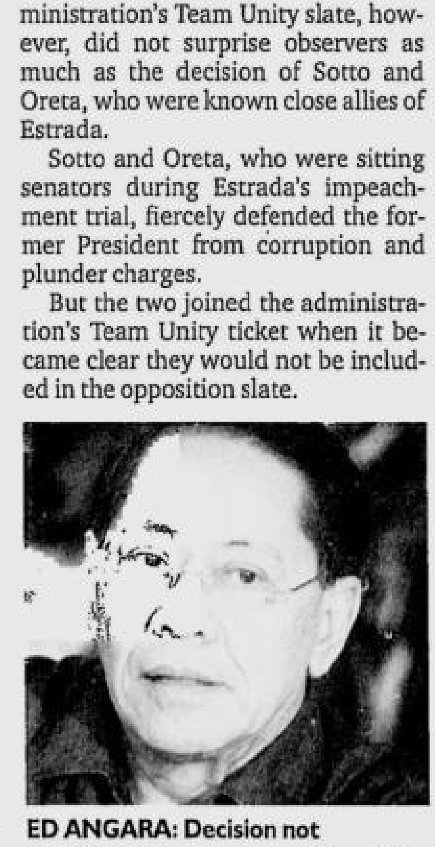
Six years after his ouster, Estrada remains a powerful political figure.

Opposition candidates have sought his endorsement and made sure they were photographed with him in his home in Greenhills, San Juan, when he was given a furlough on Feb. 18.

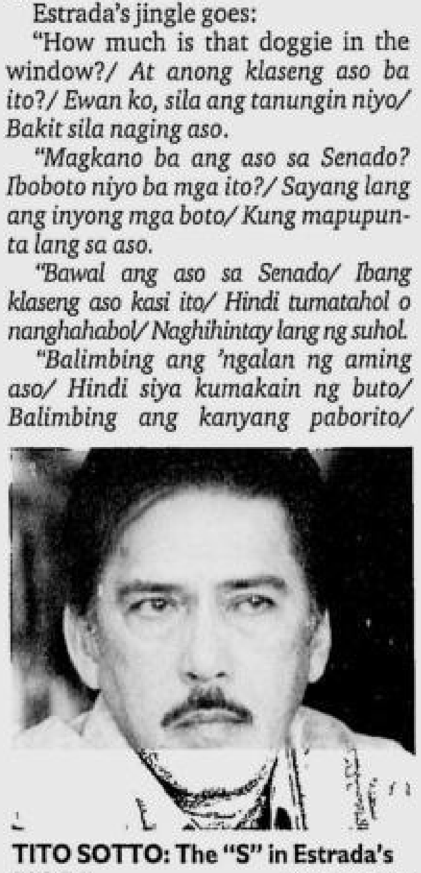
Estrada also has reportedly contributed significantly to the opposition's campaign kitty.

His son by former actress Guia Gomez, San Juan Mayor JV Estrada, was designated the opposition's campaign manager.

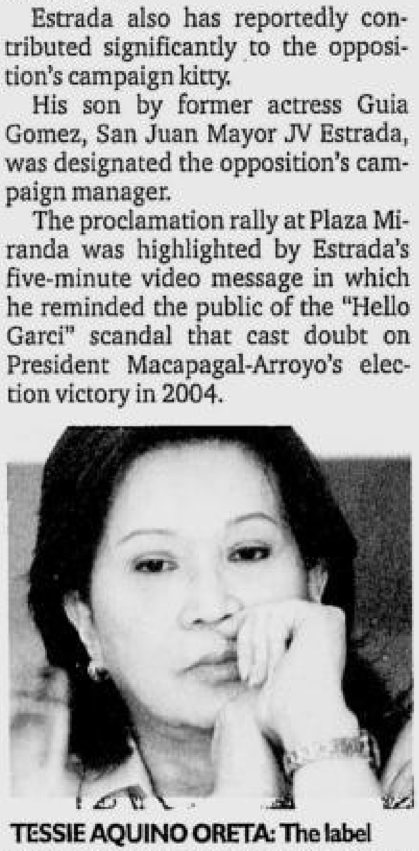
The proclamation rally at Plaza Miranda was highlighted by Estrada's five-minute video message in which he reminded the public of the "Hello Garci" scandal that cast doubt on President Macapagal-Arroyo's election victory in 2004.



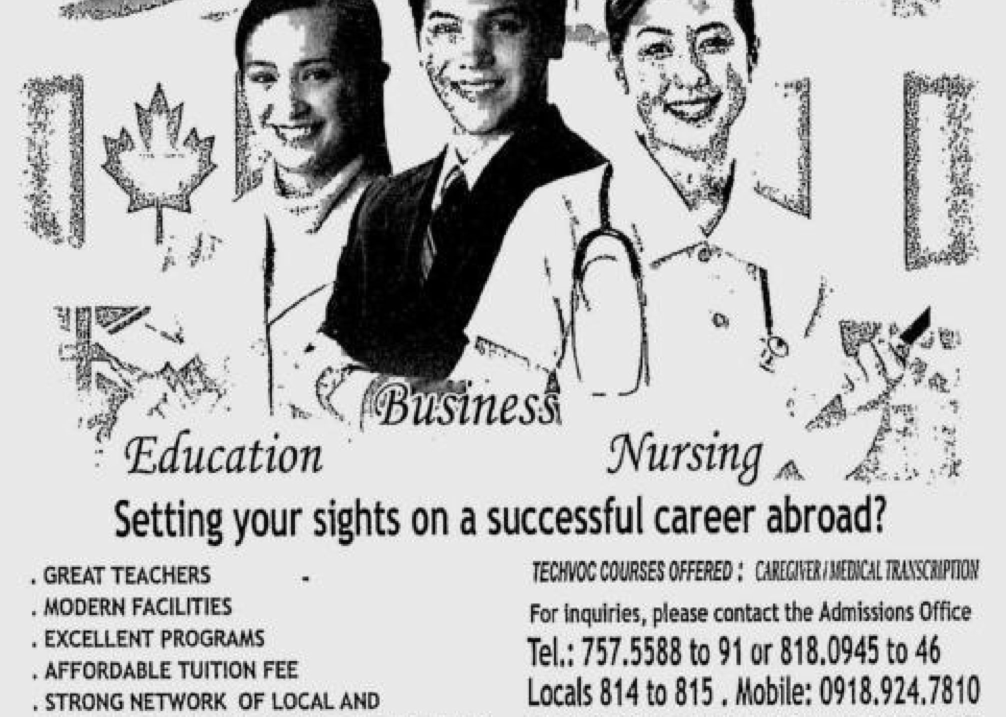
ED ANGARA: Decision not surprising. INQUIRER PHOTO

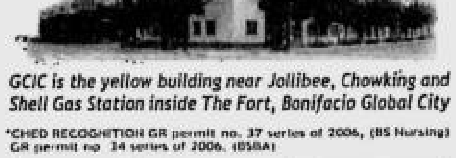


TITO SOTTO: The "S" in Estrada's "ASO." INQUIRER PHOTO



TESSIE AQUINO ORETA: The label "Dancing Queen" dies hard. INQUIRER PHOTO





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ANOTHER CONQUEST
For its successful promotion of the historic conquest of Mt. Everest by Filipinos Leo Oracion (left, holding up the May 18, 2006, issue of the INQUIRER bannering the feat) and Pastour Emata (carrying the Grand Anvil trophy), among other promotions, the Public Relations Society of the Philippines presented the 42nd Grand Anvil Award to Stratworks Marketing Communications at the Hotel Intercontinental in Makati City last Friday. Also on hand to receive the award were (from second from left) Stratworks managing director Donna Nievera-Conda, First Philippine Mt. Everest Expedition physician Dr. Ted Esguerra and FPMEE founder Art Valdez. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Mayor guilty of graft over town's footbridge

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE SANDIGANBAYAN YESTERDAY FOUND Tony Dupiano, incumbent mayor of Kayapa, Nueva Vizcaya, guilty of diverting more than P240,000 of public funds in 1999 intended for the rehabilitation of the Sta. Cruz Pingkian footbridge.

A penalty of temporary special disqualification was imposed on Dupiano by the antigraft court. He will also serve one year of imprisonment.

Court records showed that in September 1999, the municipal council appropriated some P950,000 for its annual development plan, of which P50,000 was allocated for the rehabilitation of the Sta. Cruz footbridge and P30,000 was earmarked for the repair of the Acnip hanging bridge.

Dupiano approved the purchase of construction materials for the footbridge amounting to P254,360, which was released to a private lumber and construction supply. Some P9,000 in taxes was deducted.

The two towers of the Sta. Cruz footbridge had just been completed when successive typhoons hit the town in December 1999 halting construction. Because of the heavy rains, one of the towers collapsed.

Dupiano claimed that residents of neighboring barangays asked him to repair of the Acnip hanging bridge and to use the remaining construction materials for the footbridge which had been exposed to heavy rain. He agreed.

"... We are at a loss as to why, having been a mayor for sometime, he did not secure the authority and permission of the [municipal council] before embarking on using the materials earmarked for the construction of one bridge, to rehabilitate another bridge," Associate Justice Edilberto Sandoval wrote in his 17-page decision.

"His refusal to get the permission of the [council] on matters involving public funds and property only shows his intention to disregard the law or his recklessness to ignore the same," the decision said.

There was also no need for Dupiano to divert construction materials for the other bridge as the municipal council had already earmarked a separate funds for its repair, the court added.

Inquirer
It's all over; Marcos flees!

What's the news behind the news?
- Letty Jimenez-Magsanoc
Editor in Chief, Philippine Daily Inquirer

What nonsense is this?
- Eugenia Duran-Apostol
Founder, Philippine Daily Inquirer

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City mayors launch campaign vs bets behind cityhood bills

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—CROSSING PARTY lines, city mayors have launched a campaign for the defeat of reelectionist senators who approved the conversion of towns into cities without the income requirements of cityhood.

Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Trenas, League of Cities of the Philippines (LCP) president, said the mayors would urge their constituents not to vote for these senators, who are running in both the administration and opposition slates.

In a resolution passed by the LCP national executive board on Feb. 8, the mayors asked President Macapagal-Arroyo to veto at least 15 cityhood bills that were passed on third and final reading by the Senate this month.

The LCP will also come out with paid advertisements and other measures to campaign against the senators.

Treñas said the 117-member LCP took this stand during its national convention held late last month, which was affirmed at a recent meeting of its national executive board.

The LCP believes that the conversion of towns, which do not meet the income requirements, into cities will drastically cut the share of each city in the Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA). The IRA is the 40-centavo share of local government units for every peso in taxes collected by the government.

Republic Act 9009 requires that a town should have a locally generated income of at least P100 million annually before it could be classified into a city.

"We are extremely worried that the next Congress will approve more exemptions to the detriment of the existing cities," Treñas told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

The towns include Batac, Ilocos Norte; Tabuk, Kalinga; Tayabas, Quezon; Carcar and Bogo in Cebu; Baybay, Leyte; Borongan, Eastern Samar; Catbalogan, Samar; El Salvador, Misamis Oriental; Bayugan, Agusan del Norte; Cabadbaran, Agusan del Norte; Tandag, Surigao del Sur; Lamitan, Basilan; Mati, Davao Oriental, and Guihulngan, Negros Oriental.

The senators who voted for the bills and are running for reelection included Edgardo Angara, Joker Arroyo and Ralph Recto, all under the administration slate Team Unity.

Mayor Jennifer Tan (Lakas-CMD) of Tangub City in Misamis Occidental said there should be no shortcuts in the creation of new cities.

"We do not oppose the creation of more cities but we should not create new ones if the government cannot afford to support them," said Tan in a telephone interview.

She said more cities would mean less IRA share for the existing ones and this would hurt the small cities most.

"Less IRA will mean a loss or reduction of social services which have a big impact because population continues to increase," said Tan.

Treñas said an estimated P2 million would be deducted from the IRA share of each existing city for every new city added.

Mayor Eric Codilla (Lakas-CMD) of Ormoc City in Leyte said the exemption of the 13 towns from the income requirement was unfair to those that had to work hard to become cities.

"Some towns had to merge just to satisfy the requirements," said Codilla in another telephone interview.

Mayor Hector Villanueva (Lakas-CMD) of Bais City in Negros Oriental said he had already made a public announcement to his constituents not to vote for these senators.

"Even if we belong to the administration, we have no choice. This is too much and they (senators) are lording over us because of a handful of municipalities," said Villanueva in a telephone interview.

Villanueva said he would present the administration candidates during their campaign sorties in his city "but I will not campaign for them."

"We will tell our constituents how much income our city will lose because of the addition of new cities and who are the senators that are responsible for (this income loss)," said Mayor Mel Senen Sarmiento (LP) of Calbayog City in Samar, who is also the LCP secretary-general.

Tan said her affiliation with the administration would not stop her from campaigning against the President's senatorial candidates.

"I will put the welfare of my people ahead of everything else," she said.

DELUGE OF NEW CITIES

Batac, Ilocos Norte; Tabuk, Kalinga; Tayabas, Quezon; Carcar and Bogo in Cebu; Baybay, Leyte; Borongan, Eastern Samar; Catbalogan, Samar; El Salvador, Misamis Oriental; Bayugan, Agusan del Norte; Cabadbaran, Agusan del Norte; Tandag, Surigao del Sur; Lamitan, Basilan; Mati, Davao Oriental and Guihulngan, Negros Oriental

ARROYO

ANGARA

RECTO

After ban on aerial spraying, Davao City to go organic

DAVAO CITY—AFTER BANNING the use of aerial spraying in banana plantations, the city council launched another campaign for safe food production.

Recently, the Sangguniang Panlungsod passed a resolution urging farmers to adopt environmentally friendly practices by shifting to organic pesticides and fertilizers.

Councilor Condrado Baluran, chair of the agriculture committee, said there was now a need for farmers to practice alternative farming methods.

"We know the dangers, all the harmful effects of these synthetic chemicals to people's health and the environment," he said.

Baluran said many people were now recognizing the environmental costs of agriculture.

"(These include) the deteriorating quality of drinking water and soil. The impact of agriculture on landscape and wildlife is increasing," Baluran said in the resolution.

Baluran said the resolution reflected the city government's support for organic agriculture.

"We would like to see more and more farmers shifting from their current practice to the safer one," Baluran said.

The resolution, Baluran said, aimed to "promote, support and strengthen organic agriculture."

There are currently around 2,000 organic farmers in the city, with around 300 hectares of farmlands devoted to organic food production. *Jeffrey M. Tupas, Inquirer Mindanao*

Artist group urges release of 2 artists tagged NPAs

LOS BAÑOS, LAGUNA—THE LATE National Artist Amado V. Hernandez, himself detained for his political writings, would've been marching for the freedom of these two artists—a poet and a sculptor.

It's not well known, but two artists—poet Axel Pinpin and sculptor Angie Bisuna Ipong—have remained in prison after being accused as communist rebels.

The Amado Hernandez Resource Center (AVHRC), a cultural institution named after the late National Artist, has called on the government for the immediate release of two.

The AVHRC, saying the accusations were unfounded, has also sent a petition to fellow writers, cultural workers, educators and journalists, asking support for the two artists and to help make the issue widely known.

"Our two cultural workers have fallen prey to political repression that victimizes all those fighting for good governance, social reforms and people's welfare," the petition said.

Pinpin, one of the five farmers accused of being communist rebels, is being held by police authorities at Camp Vicente Lim.

According to the group's petition, the five farmers known as Tagaytay 5 were abducted by police on April 28, 2006, in Tagaytay City.

The group said Pinpin was a consultant and research and information officer of the peasant group Kalipunan ng mga Magsasaka sa Kabite.

He is the author of a poetry collection, "Tugmaang Walang Tugma."

Ipong, an artist and a community teacher, was arrested on March 8, 2005, by men claiming to be police officers.

"She was dragged, blindfolded, transferred to various places and held incommunicado for two weeks," according to the petition.

Niña Catherine Calleja, Inquirer Southern Luzon

US woman admiral to GIs in RP: Behave

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

POTTENGER

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—Behave! A woman admiral, commander of the powerful Task Force 76, also known as the Seventh Fleet, has given this advice to US servicemen involved in the Balikatan 2007.

Rear Admiral Carol Pottenger, first woman to command an expeditionary strike group in the United States Navy, led 600 sailors and Marines in humanitarian missions and military training that resumed over the weekend, three months after a court convicted a US serviceman for raping a Filipina here.

They hosted a reception for local leaders in Olongapo City where soldiers held medical and dental clinics and are set to do community service projects in an Aeta village as part of the activities of Balikatan 2007.

Aboard the USS Juneau for Friday night's reception, Pottenger was also seen mingling with sailors, asking them how their health and work had been.

She kept her hair in a tight bun and, garbed in a white uniform, walked with feline grace.

As it turned out, this Purdue University graduate isn't all beauty.

Her military career is packed with accomplishments, including the Admiral Arleigh Burke Leadership Award early on in her years in the service, according to her profile provided by the US Embassy.

Pottenger has allowed troops with the USS Juneau, commanded by Capt. John Alexander, to take liberty or rest and recreation but within the premises of the freeport, formerly the home of the Seventh Fleet.

The rape of the Filipina, called "Nicole" in media reports, happened shortly US Marine Lance Corporal Daniel Smith met her at the Neptune Bar on Nov. 1, 2005.

"We know we are guests here. We very much want to enjoy the hospitality of the Filipino people but we need to behave in a manner that is appropriate and representative of the fact that we are here working and trying to build relationship with the people. So all of the sailors and Marines have been advised of that," Pottenger said.

She said she expects "a high standard of conduct and they know what they are supposed to do."

Asked if her instruction would make a difference since she is a woman, she said: "Oh, heavens, no. I'm wearing the uniform. I'm wearing the stripes and star and that is all that matters."

The Balikatan training, which was briefly suspended, resumed after the two governments resolved the issue of legal safeguards for US troops—a question that arose following the debate over the custody of Smith.

Philippine officials took Smith out of the Makati City jail and returned him to the US Embassy in December last year.

This year's Balikatan has been scaled down to 600 troops from the usual 5,000 and to humanitarian missions and exercises focused on situations at sea instead of a series of mostly field war games.

McClenny said the modification was not the result of the controversy over Smith's custody.

Aside from other difficult missions, Pottenger also commanded the USS Bridge that supported Operation Enduring Freedom, resupplying 10 battle groups, amphibious groups and dozens of coalition ships. For that, she earned the Battle "E" and the 2002 Arleigh Burke Fleet trophy, the embassy said.

69-yr-old retiree seeks help over land

FRUSTRATION AND exasperation over his failure to obtain his land title prompted a septuagenarian from Mamburao, Occidental Mindoro, to appeal to President Macapagal-Arroyo's intervention to end what he described as "endless waiting" for the issuance of documents by the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (Penro) vital to his application for land ownership title.

"I am now in the twilight of my life, and unless I get my land titles soon, chances are I will never realize my dream of being the real owner of my land," Teofilo Hermosilla, 69, said, adding that the document would be the only legacy he could leave to his children.

Hermosilla, in his letter to Ms Arroyo, alleged that the Penro was "withholding for no apparent reason" the processing of his application for free patent on a parcel of raw land which he had taken possession of as early as 1971. He said two other pieces of property in Mamburao met the same fate.

In a bid to seek redress of his grievances, Hermosilla filed administrative complaints against five officials and employees of the DENR in Mamburao for alleged gross inefficiency and dereliction of duty.

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Reach out to other women. You can help prevent the development of cervical cancer or better yet help protect others by spreading this information.

Discuss prevention. Your Ob-Gynecologist or your daughter's Pediatrician can discuss ways to help prevent cervical cancer. By knowing, you can help protect yourself and your daughter from cervical cancer.

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Ilocos Norte awaits decision of Marcoses

IMEE Marcos

BONGBONG Marcos

IMELDA Marcos

By Cristina Arzadon
Laoag City

WILL FORMER FIRST LADY Imelda Marcos prevail upon her daughter, Ilocos Norte Rep. Imee Marcos, to take the place of her son and Imee's brother, Gov. Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr., in the gubernatorial post?

Or will 2007 be the moment for other politicians to rise to power?

Both Bongbong and Imee are serving their third and final terms. Bongbong is the president of the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan.

Unlike in previous elections when politicians running for Ilocos Norte's key positions were predictable, this year will be a test of Bongbong's strength as a mature power broker, now that the Marcoses' only bailiwick could be left to either a relative or to known political rivals.

The March 29 deadline for the filing of local candidacies is drawing near, but the Marcoses have yet to make public their political plans. To political observers, the logical scenario will be for the siblings to switch post in the May 14 elections.

The family is aware of the deadline and is waiting for Imee's decision on whether she is running and in what position, Bongbong says.

Imelda, however, is known to figure in her children's decisions on how to chart Ilocos Norte's politics. "My mother's political instinct is very good so we always ask her for what she thinks," Bongbong said.

But talks at the Marcos camp have it that Imee is no longer interested in running for governor or for any other post, and she might instead rest and sit it out for three years before returning to politics.

IN THE KNOW

Governors of Ilocos Norte
Pre-Edsa:
- Antonio Raquiza (Marcos ally) - 1955-57
- Jose Evangelista - 1960-71
- Elizabeth Marcos-Keon - 1971-83
- "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. - 1983-86

Post-Edsa:
- Rodolfo Fariñas - 1988-98
- "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. - 1998-2007

Representatives of Ilocos Norte:
Post-Edsa:
1st District:
- Roque Ablan Jr. (Marcos ally) - 1987-98; 2001-07
- Rodolfo Fariñas (former Marcos ally) - 1998-2001

2nd District:
- Simeon Valdez (grand uncle of Bongbong and Imee Marcos)
- Mariano Nalupta Jr. (former Marcos ally)
- "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. - 1992-98
- Imee Marcos - 1998-2007

SOURCE: ILOCOS NORTE PROVINCIAL CAPITOL RECORDS

Bongbong has not confirmed Imee's reported plan to skip the May 14 elections. He is no stranger to the congressional seat, having served in Ilocos Norte's second district in the 1990s. But it will be a first for Imee to slide to the gubernatorial post should they decide to swap seats.

Scenario

The other scenario would have been for Imee to run as senator, leaving the gubernatorial post a tossup among Marcos cousins—Michael Keon, Mariano "Nonong" Marcos II and Angelo Barba, all incumbent provincial board members.

Imee was not named in the senatorial slate of either the administration or the opposition.

Keon, whose mother is the late Ilocos Norte Gov. Elizabeth Keon, has carved a niche in local and national sports, having served as Gintong Alay program chair during the Marcos regime. The program saw the rise of Philippine sports in various international competitions.

Barba, a former mayor of San Nicolas town, has been in public service the longest. He served in Ilocos Norte before the 1986 Edsa Revolt and after the Marcoses lived in exile in Hawaii.

Marcos II, a political neophyte, is a businessman who owns a ground service handling company at the Currimao seaport.

The cousins have acknowledged that their fate in local politics lies in the hands of Bongbong.

Selection process

If it is an indication, Bongbong has started a selection process in case the Marcoses will endorse any of the three.

"Can they win? Do they agree with the policies and what are we trying to do? What if they win but they would either alter or stop everything we have started? That's the reason why officials do not want to leave because we have just begun and there is always something left undone," he said.

"[My cousins] have already a base that they can begin with. The question of 'winnability' is substantially answered. But the other elements ... are they effective and do they agree with our policies ... [should be considered as well]," he added.

The governor, however, said the Marcoses were not limiting their choices for the post to relatives. His two-time running mate and trusted ally, Vice Gov. Windell Chua, could be a likely candidate for governor.

"That seems to be the presumption [that we are limiting ourselves to just the family to be our candidate for governor], but it is not the case at all," Bongbong said.

"[Chua] is next in line in terms of seniority. He is always included in our discussions. The natural thing is for him to run for governor. But again, there are other elements."

Closely watching

The Marcos camp is aware that its political rivals are closely watching who it will field for the gubernatorial post.

But Bongbong has not shown any indication that he is bothered by feelers that the camp of his erstwhile friend and ally, former Gov. Rodolfo Fariñas, is fielding a candidate for governor should Imee decide to shy away from the race.

Fariñas' elder brother, former Laoag Mayor Roger Fariñas, said he was ready to take on the challenge of slugging it out with any of the Marcos allies in the gubernatorial race.

A constant critic of the governor, Roger Fariñas said he would offer himself as an alternative candidate so the Ilocanos can exercise their right to vote instead of allowing their political leaders to end the elections even before they have started. Bongbong and Imee ran unopposed in their last two terms, he noted.

He said the governor showed no significant programs in his nine years as governor, except for a glossy accomplishment report that was long on description but short on beneficial effects to people.

Bongbong's much-hyped infrastructure programs for post-harvest facilities, such as grain warehouses and a corn processing plant to produce hog feeds, have been reduced to mere "white elephants," he said.

Fariñas said the governor should also explain how the provincial government came up with P475 million as project cost for the ongoing construction of the Ilocos Norte Hotel and Convention Center. Independent contractors have expressed disbelief at the amount, he said, noting that the province overestimated the cost of materials.

Bongbong had said the former mayor was merely staging a political gimmick for political ends. Fariñas, however, said he intended to file graft charges against him and make him accountable for the waste of public money.

"I am gathering all the documents. But I will file the complaint after the election so that I will not be accused of politicking," he said.

They sing folk songs, then get nat'l award

By Tonette Orejas
City of San Fernando

FIVE YEARS AGO, YOUNG AND OLD ARTISTS, many of them amateurs, got together to revive Kapampangan folk songs, thinking that this was a good way of making their town mates in Sta. Rita, Pampanga, proud of their past.

Such humble aim—brought to form by prodigious but unpretentious talents, and nurtured by such patrons like Cameron Mackintosh—saw ArtiSta. Rita performing for the lowly and the high, and contributing big to the cultural revival in the province.

Two best-selling Kapampangan albums and countless performances after, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts has taken notice of ArtiSta. Rita's work. On Feb. 23, it conferred on the group the Gawad Alab ng Haraya Award for production performance.

The award has placed ArtiSta. Rita in the league of the Casa San Miguel, Gilda Cordero-Fernando, Mitch Valdez and other people who have made "significant impact in the development of arts and culture in the country." It has recognized, among other things, the exemplary cultural programs that serve as valuable examples to communities, according to presidential adviser and the NCCA's Cecile Guidote-Alvarez.

And it came as a "welcome surprise," said Gie Lansang, ArtiSta. Rita musical director.

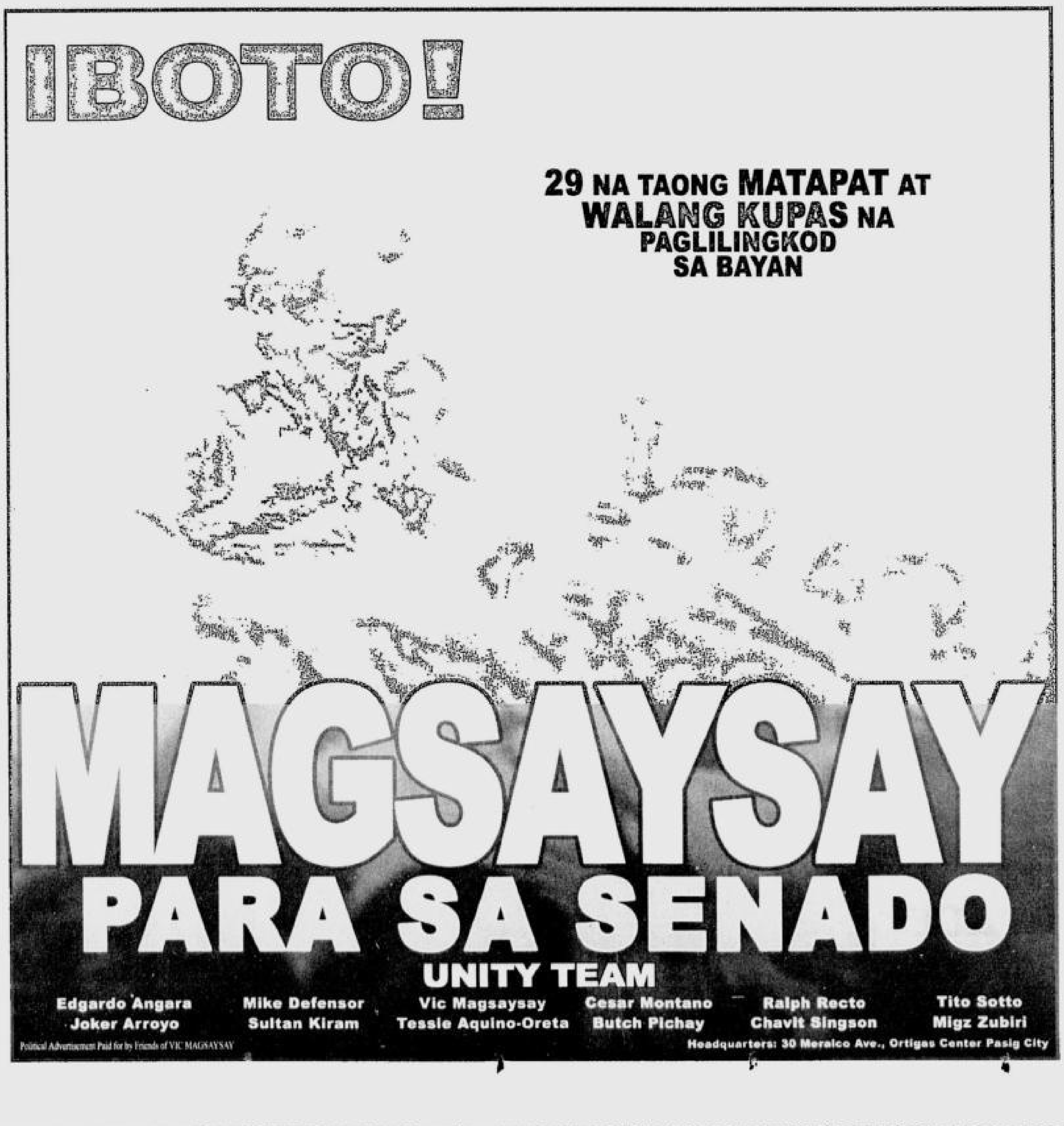
"We never knew who the other nominees were and because we were aware that the competition was national in scope, we thought we already lost to the more established theater groups that are as passionate and hardworking in the field of arts preservation and promotion," said Lansang, who also acts in the shows.

"We stage Kapampangan musicals and record songs primarily because we love what we do. And it is this passion that drives us to be the best that we can possibly be. We owe a lot to our culture and if only for that, we cannot shortchange our noble race by showcasing mediocre performances and albums," said Recy Pineda, senior musical director.

Andy Alviz, ArtiSta. Rita founding director, said the NCCA award appreciated the role of local culture in people's lives.

"At the end of the day, at the end of a tiring rehearsal, you lay down and smiled not because of the awards and all the adulation and clamor, but because you remembered an old lady in the audience who had almost forgotten the music of her beloved race, flashed an unforgettable smile of gratitude for making her remember who she really was. That smile was more than a thousand awards," said Alviz.

For a group that "honors a small folk song with a world-class rendition," the NCCA award comes as an inspiration to continue doing well, said historian Robby Tantingco.



Comelec may also ban Montano prints

BAGUIO CITY—FOR THE DURATION of the campaign, senatorial candidate Cesar Montano is not allowed by law to air his TV commercials, movies and documentaries. Does the ban include clay molds of Montano's hands and feet?

Inspired by the colorful sidewalk of the Graumann's Chinese Theater in Hollywood, the Baguio Community of Volunteers Inc. fashioned clay molds of the hand and foot impressions of show biz personalities—including Montano's—made during last year's launch of the Metro Manila Film Festival Philippines in this city.

But election restrictions limiting a candidate's public exposure could also cover these prints, said Armando Velasco, Cordillera director of the Commission on Elections.

"The hand and foot [imprints] are a gray area as far as [election] rules are concerned, but if the display also identifies Montano, then it is already a violation," Velasco said, adding that the Comelec would have to study the matter. *Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

THEN ACTOR Cesar Montano imprints his foot and hand-marks at the Yapak walk of fame in a popular mall during the Baguio City film festival opening . The event took place last year, well before the actor became a senatorial candidate. TOOTS SOBERANO / NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Sotto: I never said Erap magic's gone

TEAM UNITY SENATORIAL CANDIDATE Vicente "Tito" Sotto yesterday expressed sadness that he will not be enjoying the endorsement of a former ally, deposed President Joseph Estrada, in the May elections, but he clarified that he never said the "Erap magic" was gone.

Sotto was reacting an INQUIRER headline yesterday which quoted him as saying the that the vaunted "Erap magic" was no more.

"I never said that. Nowhere in the story did I say that," Sotto told the INQUIRER. Therefore, any negative reaction from the Estrada camp and from Estrada himself, if any, would be based on a statement he never said, the former senator said.

Sotto said he was simply explaining that "in any endorsement of a political figure, there will be both negative and positive results." For example, he said, an endorsement by Estrada will have positive effects on Estrada supporters and negative effects on Estrada opponents. The same goes for President Macapagal-Arroyo, he said.

Sotto also cited surveys showing positive and negative effects of endorsements by political figures. He said the endorsement of Estrada and Ms Arroyo would cancel each other out, saying "I don't think Erap or GMA is the issue."

"And therefore, the campaign thrust should be toward the majority of our countrymen who are not affected by endorsements." Sotto said. He said 48 percent of the voters in a midterm election will vote for who they think deserve it.

"That's a big number," he said. This, he added, is a sign of the maturity of the voters.

"I am, of course, saddened by the fact that after all these years, Erap will not endorse my candidacy," Sotto lamented. But he said he was being endorsed by the former president's son, Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, and had permission to say so.

Chavit adds another 'G' to campaign

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

SENATORIAL BET LUIS "CHAVIT" SINGSON has added another "G" to the three Gs of Philippine elections—guns, goons and gold—to "sex up" his campaign sorties with the administration-backed Team Unity.

Aside from his usual retinue of beefy bodyguards, the Ilocos Sur Governor was accompanied yesterday by a dozen curvaceous and pretty girls in a media briefing of Team Unity candidates.

Dubbed "Chavit's Chicks," the girls wore Singson's campaign T-shirts—made smaller and tighter by tying a knot in front—mini skirts and stilettos. They were the scene stealers in the hotel lobby where a political event was being held.

An aide of Singson said the girls would be part of the governor's contingent when he visits towns and cities during the campaign. With Team Unity going heavy on preaching the administration's platform during the hustings, Singson's supporters felt the presence of these pretty women would spice up any event.

The aide said the girls' were tapped by Singson's friends from the entertainment industry who had chipped in to support one of their biggest backers.

Singson has produced movies in the past, according to his aide, which explains why he has close ties with the entertainment industry.

He is also a relative of movie mogul Vic del Rosario whose Viva Hotbabes were crowd-drawers during President Macapagal-Arroyo's re-election bid in 2004.

Singson, who prides himself as a fearless and virile leader, said he was pleasantly surprised when the pretty girls showed up.

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-Russel Arida, San Ildefonso, Alaminos

Russel and wife Annabelle bought two PHILIPS CFLs for their school supplies store and won one dream ride. Why choose PHILIPS? "Kilala sa quality, at may promo pa!" Russel adds: "Matagal ang buhay ng PHILIPS, yung iba, sandali lang ang liwanag." PHILIPS truly goes a long, long way.

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Terror suspect nabbed in Taguig

Linked to cop killings, say police

By Julie M. Aurelio

A SUSPECTED TERRORIST WAS NABBED IN Taguig City last Friday, weeks after he eluded arrest in a raid conducted by policemen and Marines on an alleged terrorist hideout in Taytay, Rizal.

Supt. Alfred Corpus, Taguig police chief, identified the suspect as Sindatok Utto, 54, a former military man and a native of Sultan Sabarungis, Maguindanao.

Utto, Corpus said, was a member of the Sanjali Utto terrorist group whose hideout in Lupang Arenda, a remote area in Taytay, Rizal, was raided on Feb. 1 by members of the Philippine National Police Criminal Investigation and Detection Group and the Philippine Marines.

Sanjali and two of his aides were arrested during the operation while another member, Mohammad Utto, was shot and killed.

Sanjali, according to the police, was a ranking member of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front's Special Operations Group who trained members of the Abu Sayyaf and MILF in bomb-making.

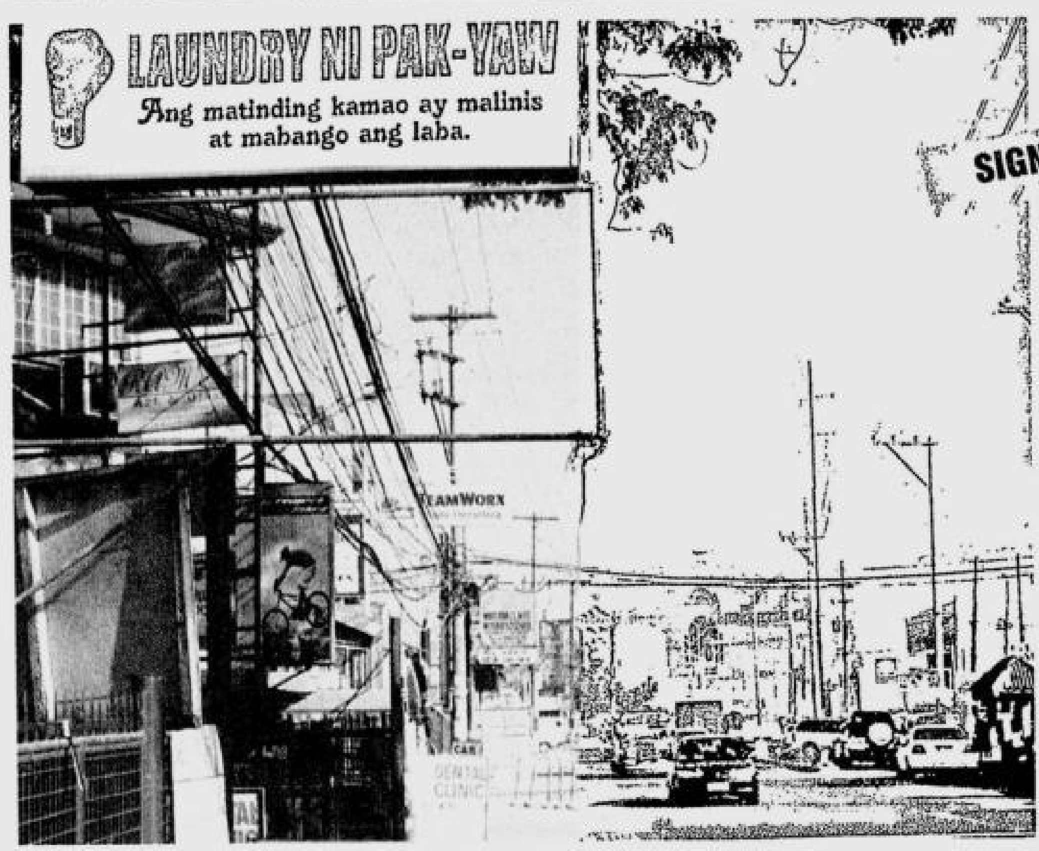
Sindatok, on the other hand, was arrested in Quiapo Dos, Barangay Maharlika, Taguig City last Friday after the police received information of his whereabouts.

The Taguig police said they have already filed charges of illegal possession of firearms against the suspect.

However, Corpus said he is coordinating with Rizal provincial chief, Senior Supt. Freddie Panen, who will be sending investigators to Taguig to file an amended complaint against Sindatok.

The suspect is believed to be behind the killing of two policemen in Rizal on Feb. 11.

PO3 Romeo Malinao and PO2 Urbano Enero, members of the Regional Mobile Group, were conducting covert intelligence operations in Sitio Tapayan, Lupang Arenda, when they were shot by four men on board two motorcycles.



KNOCKOUT SERVICE Extra-clean services guaranteed by this laundry shop located at Imelda Avenue in Cainta, Rizal. ROGER CARPIO

Ex-Makati vice mayor faces libel suit

By DJ Yap

THE MAKATI CITY PROSECUTOR HAS FOUND probable cause to indict former Makati Vice Mayor Roberto Brillante for libel in connection with statements he made to media last year in which he accused his political rival, Mayor Jejomar Binay, of wrongdoing.

The P10-million libel suit filed by Binay against Brillante was raffled off to the sala of Judge Selma Palacio Alaras of Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 62.

"A warrant for Brillante's arrest will be issued by the court soon," branch clerk of court Emil Ibañez told the INQUIRER yesterday.

In his resolution dated Feb. 8, Assistant City Prosecutor Edgardo Hirang recommended a bail of P12,000 for Brillante, who was charged with making defamatory statements against Binay in a press conference held on Nov. 3.

Brillante held a press conference to react to the dismissal of a graft case he had lodged against Binay at the Sandiganbayan.

Brillante had accused the Makati mayor of conspiring with other city officials in buying millions of pesos worth of overpriced office furniture for the new City Hall.

In the press conference, Brillante distributed copies of his statement which read: "This is another P30 million question for many lawyers and Makati taxpayers: Have they been reached (sic) by the reported P100 million lobby money allegedly flowing from Mayor Binay?"

It continued: "To Justice (Diosdado) Peralta, I urge you: Stop the shameful and unscrupulous act of lawyering for Mayor Binay and inhibit yourself from any and all cases in the Sandiganbayan involving your 'client' Binay."

Binay, in his complaint, said the press statement imputed that he had engaged the services of Peralta, a Sandiganbayan justice, to facilitate the dismissal of the case against him which was pending in the court's Third Division.

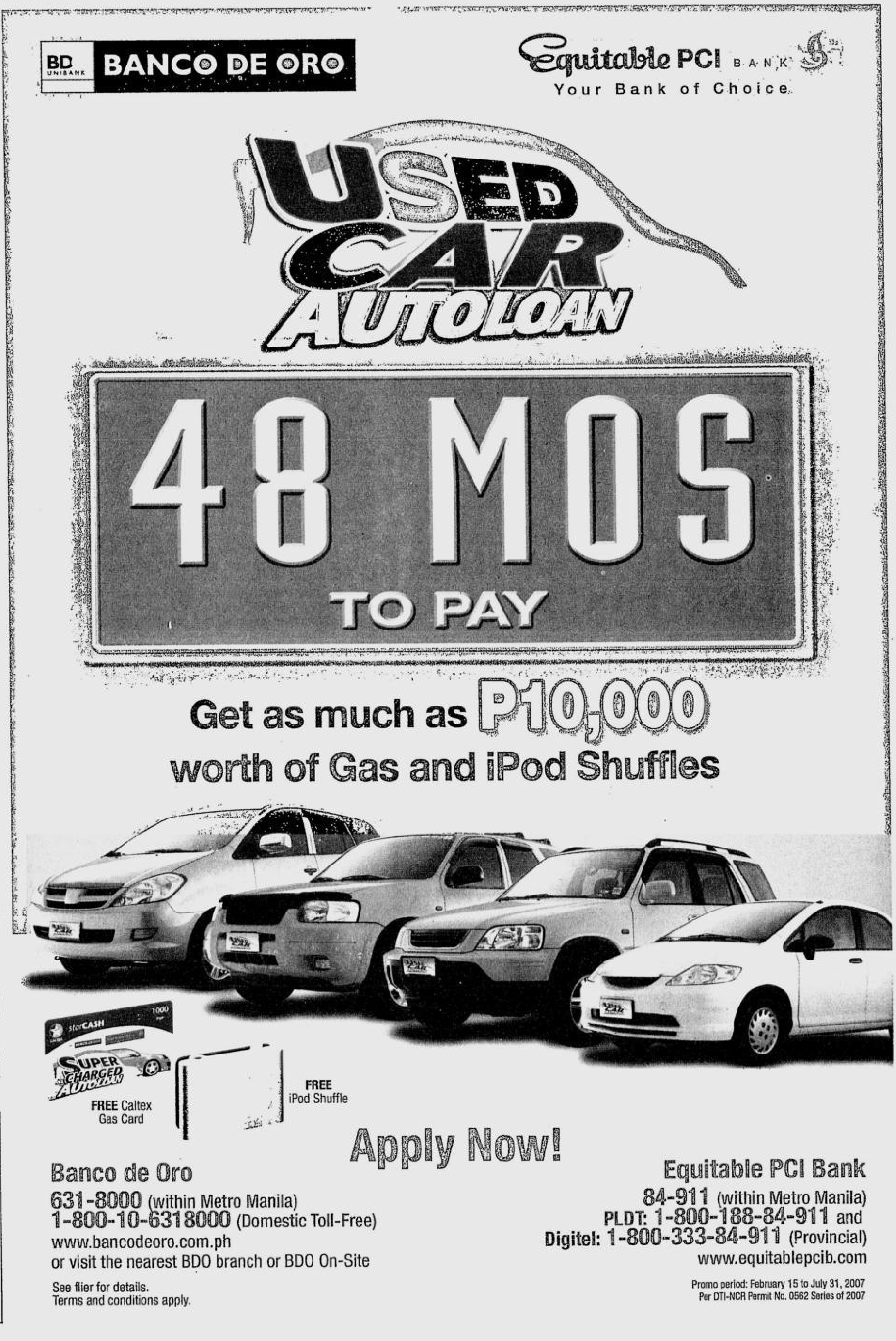
The statement also insinuated that he had set aside P100 million to "lobby" for favorable decisions in cases involving him, Binay added.

DID YOU KNOW

FORMER President Corazon Aquino's first Executive Order, issued on Feb. 28, 1986, created the Presidential Commission on Good Government which holds office on Edsa, Mandaluyong City.

The commission was tasked to recover ill-gotten wealth amassed during the Marcos regime and to investigate cases of graft and corruption. It has the power to sequester and maintain assets, pending judicial determination of their ownership.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research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Calixto seeks appeals court help on reinstatement

By Julie M. Aurelio

DISMISSED PASAY CITY VICE MAYOR Antonino Calixto yesterday said he would ask the help of the Court of Appeals in getting back his old post.

Calixto told the INQUIRER that he would file a motion in court and ask its sheriff to help him return to City Hall.

Last Friday, he went to City Hall armed with the appeals court order stopping the Ombudsman and Department of the Interior and Local Government from implementing an order for his dismissal from service on graft charges. But he was sent home by the police who also turned him away when he returned on Monday to preside over the flag-raising ceremony at the City Hall.

"I only want to go through the legal process," Calixto said in a phone interview.

He added that he intends to file contempt charges "against those who refuse to let me inside the City Hall and let me assume my duties."

Calixto declined to identify those responsible and said he would have to consult his lawyer first.

The former vice mayor is now holding office at the local Office for Senior Citizens' Affairs (Osca), near the Pasay City Sports Complex, a day after he was booted out of the nearby Health Center.

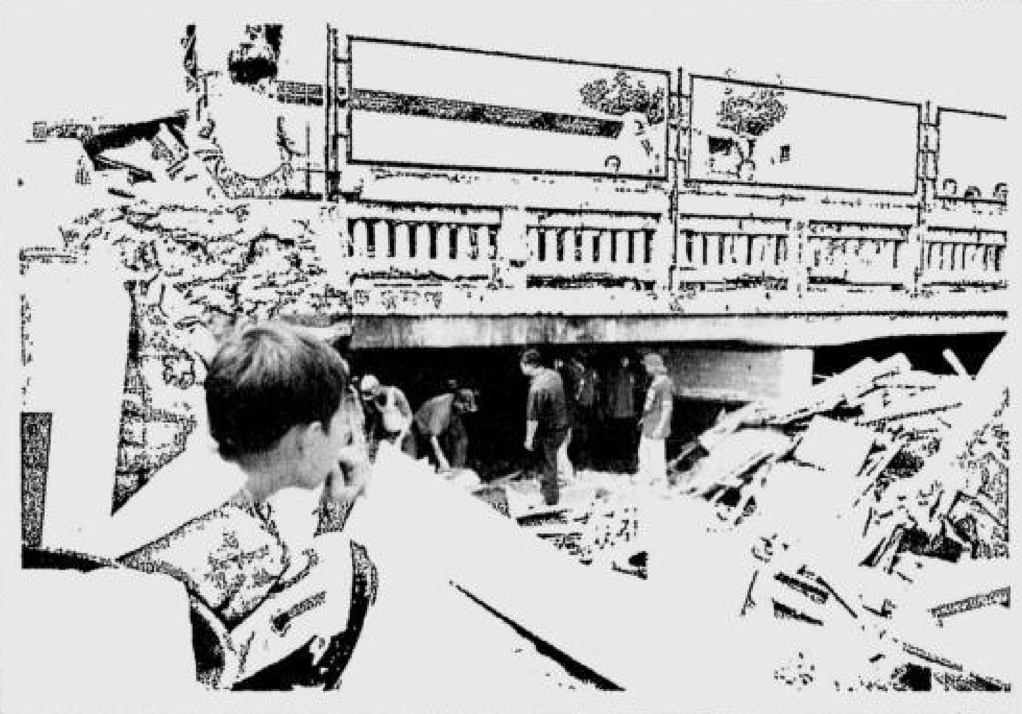
Mayor Alan Panaligan ordered the closure of the center after Calixto sought refuge in the facility when his blood pressure rose to 160/100 on Monday.

"We had to close it down. The vice mayor was hampering the delivery of basic services when he made the health center his base," Panaligan said in a phone interview.

He added that the Osca staff had complained to him about the "invasion" of their office.

"The Osca employees have nowhere to go. Again, basic services are hampered because of the vice mayor's insistence," Panaligan said.

Unperturbed, Calixto said he plans to hold a meeting with the heads of the different departments in City Hall to inform them about his assumption of office.



NO MORE SHELTER Two boys watch as members of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority dismantle their houses under the bridge on the South Superhighway in Manila. More than 50 families were displaced during the operation.
RODEL ROTONI

New warrants out for Valenzuela officials

By Nancy C. Carvajal

NEW WARRANTS HAVE BEEN ISSUED for the arrest of three barangay officials in Valenzuela City who were linked to the killing of six factory workers in Caloocan City last year.

The warrants were issued last week after the homicide charge against the suspects—Barangay Bignay chair Graciano Victoriano, operations officer Santiago Lumabao and Ricky Flor—was upgraded to murder following a reinvestigation of the case.

Murder is a nonbailable offense.

Victoriano and the other suspects were first arrested in October and charged with homicide after they were implicated by witnesses who said they saw them shoot six factory workers in the Nova Romania Subdivision in Barangay 168, near the boundary of Valenzuela City. The three were later set free on bail.

The victims were identified as Ramon Villanueva, Arthur Cadorna, Alfredo Asuero, Jefferson Agripinan, Remy Ponteros and Junrel Menuiso. The six, workers of a smelting firm in Bulacan, had just come from a drinking spree when barangay watchmen arrested them for allegedly being unruly near a terminal in Deparo, Caloocan City on Sept. 30.

The six were loaded into a van and brought to the subdivision, allegedly on the barangay chair's orders, Lumabao, one of the suspects, told the police after their arrest. Their bullet-riddled bodies were found by workers the following day.

Supt. William Macavinta, Caloocan police chief, said he and his men were looking for the suspects who reportedly went into hiding after they learned that new warrants have been issued for their arrest.

Metro's billboards to have new look soon

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

COMMUTERS AND MOTORISTS can look forward to having a clearer view of the skyline in the metropolis after six months.

The Department of Public Works and Highways has issued a new circular ordering billboard manufacturers and owners to switch to unipoles within six months.

Patterned after those used in China and other countries, a unipole is a single quality-grade galvanized steel pole standing about 12 meters high. There is a support structure at the top of the pole which allows it to hold a billboard.

Current billboard structures use multiple beams and frames.

National Building Code Development Office director Emmanuel Cuntapay told the INQUIRER the other day that the circular also allows the installation of new billboards but only if unipoles are used "so as not to unduly obstruct the natural view of the landscape, distract the view of the public or pose hazard to traffic, as well as defile, debase, or offend aesthetic and cultural values and traditions."

Copies of the circular have already been distributed to billboard manufacturers and owners. It has also been explained to building officials assigned in local government units all over Metro Manila.

The same order also limits the size and height of billboards. Cuntapay, citing the building code as well as the order, said that billboards on top of buildings should not be taller than 3.60 meters.

The size of the billboard should also not exceed one-third of the area on which it stands to ensure that should the billboard collapse, it will not fall off the building but within the roof area, Cuntapay explained.

He added that they would resume dismantling billboards violating the building code and other provisions of the circular after 15 days.

Last Friday, Public Works Secretary Manuel Bonoan led the dismantling of an "illegal and unsafe" billboard on Coastal Road in Parañaque City. The DPWH said the billboard was using the road right-of-way, apart from lacking the necessary permits.

The agency said it has already inspected 15,793 billboards all over the country, of which 9,576 had been found unsafe and were dismantled.

Cell phone thieves get life term for slay

By Allison W. Lopez

THREE MEN WHO STABBED AND KILLED A man whom they had just robbed of his cell phone more than six years ago will spend the rest of their lives in jail.

Judge Manuel M. Barrios of the Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 54 yesterday found Jonjie Esoy, Rolando Ciano and Roger Bolalacao guilty of robbery with homicide and sentenced them to life imprisonment.

"*Sana nga, may* death penalty *pa* (I wish that the death penalty was still in effect)," said Lemy Pacheco, sister of Lorenzo Coro, the suspects' victim.

Coro was in a jeep on Jan. 18, 2001 at Taft Avenue corner T. M. Kalaw Street when the suspects boarded the vehicle, Andrea Pabalan, who was with the victim when the incident occurred, said in her testimony in court.

Two of the suspects took out a *balisong* (fan knife) and stabbed Coro while the third snatched the victim's cell phone. Coro later died of his injuries. The suspects denied the charge against them but the judge said the witnesses' accounts were "trustworthy."

Makati's common poster areas list out

By DJ Yap

ELECTION 07

THE ELECTION OFFICER of Makati's first district has released the list of common poster areas in the city's barangays, as officials called on candidates in the upcoming May 14 elections not to post their campaign materials on walls and lampposts on major roads.

The local Commission on Elections office identified specific areas in each of the district's 11 barangays where candidates may place their posters.

Included in the list were spaces near the Sports Complex, covered by Barangays Carmona, Kasilawan, La Paz, Olympia and Poblacion, and the Liwasang Luciano Park on Bonifacio corner Evangelista Streets.

The fence of the Palanan Fire Station on Casino corner South Super Highway in Barangay Palanan, and the space near the Pio del Pilar Barangay Hall on Washington Street were also designated common poster areas.

In Barangay San Antonio, candidates may put up their campaign posters on the fence of the old Pamantasan ng Makati on Mayapis Street, while in Barangay Tejeros, they may utilize the space near the former barangay hall on J. P. Rizal Street.

The space near the barangay hall of Valenzuela on Pililia corner Hormiga Streets was also listed as a common poster area.

The stretch of Vito Cruz to Pasay Road, alongside the recently cleared tracks of the Philippine National Railway, was also declared a common poster area provided that candidates construct their own billboard under Comelec supervision.

Danilo Villas, chief of Makati's department of environmental services, said his office would make public, on a regular basis, the names of candidates whose campaign materials are posted outside designated areas.

Liga ng mga Barangay president and councilor Rodolfo Sese also released a memorandum instructing all barangay chairs to monitor and remove all illegal posters in the city.

METROBRIEFS

No more recruiting for him

THE NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation has arrested a man who allegedly offered nonexistent jobs in South Korea to his victims. Bernardo Meneses, of Sierra Madre St., Marikina Village, Marikina City, was arrested by agents of the NBI-Background Investigation Division during an entrapment operation in a Quezon City mall the other day. Meneses now faces charges for violation of Republic Act 9208 (Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003) after six persons, including Jo Ann Margaret Mangubat, accused him of recruiting them for jobs in South Korea last year. According to the victims, he promised them a monthly salary of $650 and charged them P10,000 each as fees. However, after months of waiting, the victim said nothing came out of Meneses' promises, prompting them to seek help from the NBI. A check with the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration revealed that the suspect was not authorized to recruit workers for overseas employment.

Tina G. Santos

In big trouble

FOR SELLING an almost insignificant amount of drugs, a man faces a life in prison and no less than half a million pesos in fines. Quezon City Judge Severino de Castro Jr. yesterday sentenced Garry de la Cruz to life imprisonment for selling 0.02 gram of methamphetamine hydrochloride (shabu) to an undercover policeman in 2003. In his decision, De Castro also ordered the accused to pay a P500,000 fine for violation of Section 5, Article II of Republic Act 9165 or the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002. Court records showed that De la Cruz was arrested by operatives of the Quezon City Police District on May 29, 2003 in Manresa, Quezon City after he sold shabu to a policeman who had posed as a customer.

Margaux C. Ortiz

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glorietta GREENBELT

World powers to work on UN resolution on Iran

LONDON—SIX KEY WORLD powers pledged to reconvene on Thursday to continue work on a new, tougher UN Security Council resolution on how to tackle Iran's defiant nuclear program.

After meeting in London to begin work on the new resolution, representatives from Germany and the five permanent members of the Security Council—the United States, Britain, France, China and Russia—will reconvene Thursday to discuss the "sanctions resolution," the US state department said.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the UN's nuclear watchdog, confirmed last week that Iran had ignored the Security Council's deadline to stop enriching uranium and had expanded its nuclear program.

"We had a productive first discussion of the next steps following the director general of the IAEA's confirmation that Iran has failed to comply with SCR (Security Council resolution) 1737," John Sawers, the senior British Foreign Office official chairing Monday's talks, said after they broke up.

Sawers said they began work on a new Security Council resolution, and were considering "how best to re-engage with Iran." "We are all committed to seeking a negotiated solution." US State Department spokesperson Sean McCormack said the parties involved would be in touch again Thursday via telephone "to hammer out the elements of a UN sanctions resolution." He said the parties still wanted Iran to negotiate, but added: "We are equally committed to sending the message to the Iranian government: should they choose not to proceed down that pathway, then there will be consequences." The already tense backdrop to the meeting was fueled Sunday when Iran sent its first rocket into space and hardline President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad likened uranium enrichment to "a train on a one-way track." There were also fresh indications of disagreement between some Security Council permanent members going into the talks.

The US, France and Britain want the Security Council to impose fresh sanctions but Russia and China, which hold veto rights and have economic, energy and strategic interests in Iran, are reluctant to pile on the pressure.

Former UN weapons inspector Hans Blix, a key opponent of the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq, on Monday warned that "humiliating" Iran over its uranium enrichment could spawn intransigence.

"Why did the Iraqis behave as they did in the 1990s (and) send away the UNSCOM inspectors and close the door to them?" he asked, referring to the UN Special Commission mandated to inspect Iraqi weapons of mass destruction after the 1991 Gulf War.

"One element was 'humiliation,'" he said.

Britain, meanwhile, insisted that the international community remains united in seeking to persuade Tehran to back down, while US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice again offered Sunday to hold negotiations with Iran if it suspends enrichment.

"We're leaving open the track of negotiations, because the best way to resolve this would be to have Iran come to the table," she added.

In response, Iran stressed Monday that it would consider talks but would not stop its nuclear program as a precondition.

"If the United States presents a request for negotiations through the official channels and it appears these negotiations are positive and constructive and logical, we are ready to examine this request with a positive eye," chief negotiator Ali Larijani told the IRNA agency.

"Fixing preconditions means that you have already determined the result of negotiations in advance and it is for this reason that such policies have produced no result up to now." The US, while insisting it has no military plans against Iran, is beefing up its naval firepower in the Gulf.

The New Yorker magazine reported Sunday that it is stepping up covert operations in Iran in a new strategy that risks sparking an "open confrontation" and benefits Sunni radicals.

Tehran insists that its uranium enrichment program is designed to fuel power stations for civilians. *AFP*

FORGIVING DEITY. A sculpture of a Pre-Hispanic deity that forgave sexual excesses and considered prostitution as a necessary trade, is displayed at a museun of the Mexican central state of Puebla, on Feb. 27, as part of the exhibition "Godesses and Immortal." AFP

UN's top court clears Serbia of genocide

THE HAGUE—THE HIGHEST UN court cleared Serbia on Monday of direct responsibility for genocide in Bosnia during the 1992-95 war, but said Belgrade had violated its obligation to prevent and punish the mass killing.

Bosnia had asked the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to rule on whether Serbia committed genocide through the killing, rape and ethnic cleansing that ravaged Bosnia during the war, in one of the court's biggest cases in its 60-year history.

It was the first time a state had been tried for genocide, outlawed in a UN convention in 1948 after the Nazi Holocaust.

ICJ President Judge Rosalyn Higgins said the court concluded the massacre of Muslim men by Bosnian Serb forces at Srebrenica did constitute genocide, but that the Serbian state could not be held responsible for the mass killing, or complicity in the act.

A judgment in Bosnia's favor could have allowed it to seek billions of dollars of compensation from Serbia.

"The court finds by 13 votes to 2 that Serbia has not committed genocide," she said after an almost three-hour ruling.

But the court also ruled that Serbia had failed to prevent genocide and punish the perpetrators. Bosnian Serb wartime leader Radovan Karadzic and military commander Ratko Mladic, both accused of genocide for Srebrenica, are still at large.

Some 8,000 Muslims from Srebrenica and surrounding villages in eastern Bosnia were killed in July 1995. The bodies of about half of them have been found in more than 80 mass graves nearby. *Reuters*

Panel recommends charges vs Thaksin, wife

BANGKOK—AN ANTIGRAFT panel has recommended that criminal charges be filed against deposed Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and his wife over a questionable land purchase that earned them millions of dollars, an official said Tuesday.

Thaksin and his wife, Pojamarn Shinawatra, are accused of violating a conflict of interest law that carries a penalty of up to 10 years imprisonment, said Udom Fuengfung, who headed the inquiry for the Assets Examination Committee, or AEC. A criminal court must still determine whether to accept the case.

The AEC's recommendation late Monday was the latest move toward attempts to indict Thaksin, his family and colleagues on corruption charges.

THAKSIN AP

Thaksin was accused of massive corruption during his two terms in office, and the military cited graft allegations as one of the key justifications for staging a bloodless coup against him in September.

The 772 million baht (at today's rate $23 million) land deal was among 13 cases under investigation by military-appointed panels.

The case deals with Pojamarn's 2003 purchase of some prime Bangkok real estate from the Financial Institutions Development Fund, or FIDF, a state rescue fund directed by the central bank. Its value reportedly doubled after she bought it.

"Mr. Thaksin and his wife violated article 152 of the criminal law, which deals with conflict of interest, for illegally benefiting from state property," said Udom. Anticorruption laws bar a prime minister or his spouse from doing business with a government agency.

Thaksin was overseas at the time of the September coup and has not returned to Thailand since.

The AEC said that if Thaksin wants to testify on his behalf the panel would allow him to do so in person, in writing or would send an official to meet him abroad, Udom said.

Last month, the AEC recommended that criminal tax evasion charges be filed against Pojamarn and her brother for failing to pay almost 546 million baht (at today's rate about $15 million), in taxes on a 1997 transfer of shares in the family business. *AP*

Painkillers raise BP, says study

WASHINGTON—POPULAR painkillers such as aspirin, ibuprofen and acetaminophen can raise blood pressure and thus the risk of heart disease among men, US researchers reported on Monday.

Men who took such drugs for most days in a week were about one-third more likely to be diagnosed with high blood pressure than men not taking them, the researchers found.

Their findings, published in the Archives of Internal Medicine, reinforce a study published in 2002 that these commonly used drugs raise blood pressure in women.

"This is a potentially preventable cause of high blood pressure," Dr. John Forman of Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, who led the study, said in a statement.

Millions of people take the painkillers as pills every day to treat headaches, arthritis, muscle pulls and other aches and pains.

"These are the three most commonly used drugs in the United States," Dr. Gary Curhan, who also worked on the study, said in a telephone interview.

For their study, the researchers looked at a continuing study of male health professionals. After they filtered out everyone who already had high blood pressure and other problems, they had 16,000 men whose records they checked for a four year period.

Men who took acetaminophen (paracetamol), sold generically and under the Tylenol brand name, six or seven days a week were 34 percent more likely to be diagnosed with high blood pressure than men who did not take analgesics.

Men who took aspirin that regularly were 26 percent more likely to have high blood pressure than non-users. For non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, or NSAIDS, which include ibuprofen and naproxen, the increased risk was 38 percent. *Reuters*

WORLDBRIEFS

3 Frenchmen killed in Saudi Arabia

RIYADH—Three French expatriates working in Saudi Arabia were shot dead during a desert trip on Monday in what appeared to be the first militant attack on foreigners in three years. An Interior Ministry statement said gunmen in a car fired at a group of nine French nationals after stopping them near Medina in the west of the vast desert country. "They are all residents who work in Riyadh and who had gone on a desert trip," Interior Ministry spokesperson Mansour al-Turki told Saudi television, adding the attackers escaped after apparently stalking the group as they camped overnight. The French Foreign Ministry said one was a teacher and two others worked with French firm Schneider Electric. *Reuters*

Bus crash kills 6 in Sweden

STOCKHOLM—Two buses crashed Tuesday on an icy road in central Sweden, leaving at least six people dead and about 40 injured, nine of them seriously, a rescue spokesperson said. The crash occurred outside Uppsala, about 70 kilometers north of Stockholm, said Leif Hammarstrom, a spokesperson for rescue service SOS Alarm. *AP*

First case of human bird flu in Laos

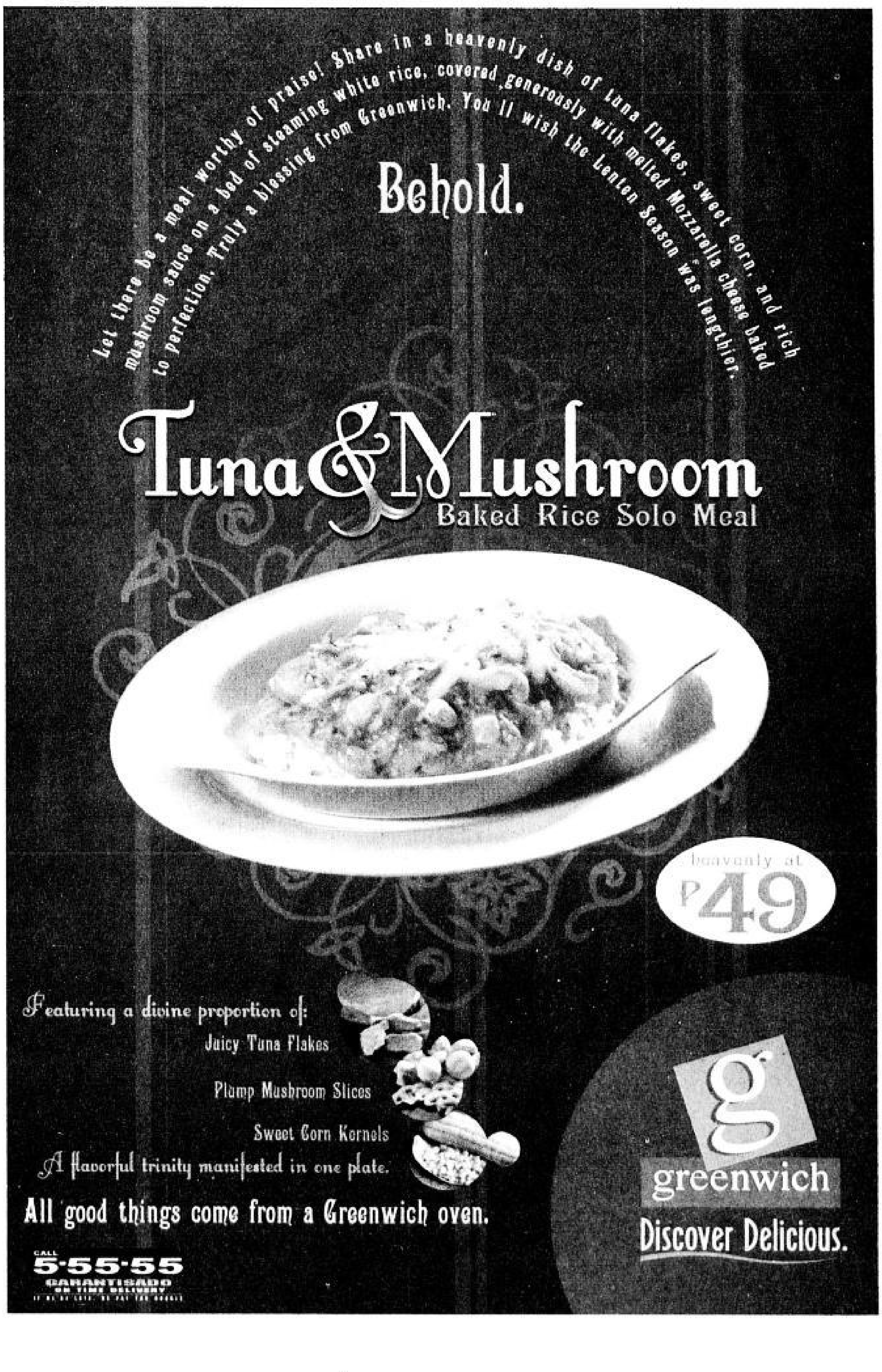
BANGKOK—Laos has found its first suspected human case of bird flu in a 15-year-old girl from an area where the killer virus broke out in poultry two weeks ago, official media said on Monday. The girl went down with headaches and aching limbs, as well as a runny nose and cough on Feb. 15, Health Minister Ponmek Dalalay was quoted as saying in the Vientiane Times, monitored by Reuters in Bangkok. Two days later, her parents moved her to a hospital in neighboring Thailand, which is much better equipped to treat suspected victims and conduct tests than the landlocked communist nation. Ponmek said initial analysis in Bangkok had confirmed the girl was suffering from an H5 virus, although it was not yet clear if she had the N1 bird flu variant that experts fear could mutate into a highly contagious and lethal form of human flu. *Reuters*

Bus falls into river; 14 killed

KATHMANDU—At least 14 people died and 25 were hurt when a passenger bus plunged into a river after skidding off a Nepal mountain road on Tuesday, police said. "Thirteen people died on the spot and one succumbed to injuries while being taken to a hospital after the bus veered off the highway and plunged into the Trishuli River," said police officer Ram Chandra Sharma. The bus, heading towards southern town of Birgunj from Kathmandu, plunged 130 meter into the river at Mugling, 110 km west of the capital in the pre-dawn accident. *AFP*

New PM named in Guinea

CONAKRY—Guinea's under-fire President Lansana Conte appointed a former UN diplomat as prime minister Monday to replace an unpopular ally, bowing to union demands after weeks of violence that have claimed more than 100 lives. A presidential decree naming Lansana Kouyate, 56, to the post was read out on state television. Kouyate was selected from four candidates proposed by the country's influential trade unions and civil society groups in a deal struck Sunday between the ailing Conte and the labor movement. Ibrahima Fofana, head of the National Union of Workers of Guinea (USTG), said earlier that representatives of his labor body had, along with others who launched a crippling general strike last month, voted to suspend the stoppage from Tuesday. *AFP*



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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Court stops Smith's burial in Bahamas

MIAMI—A FLORIDA APPEALS court suspended on Monday a lower court ruling that would have allowed the burial of former Playboy Playmate Anna Nicole Smith in the Bahamas, as the battle over her baby shifted to the Bahamian capital.

The Fourth District Court of Appeal in West Palm Beach granted an emergency petition by Smith's mother, Virgie Arthur, to stop a court-appointed guardian for Smith's 5-month-old daughter Dannielynn from taking the body to the islands, where Smith lived the final months of her life.

The legal maneuvering further delayed a funeral for Smith, the buxom tabloid star who died suddenly at age 39 on Feb. 8 at a Florida casino hotel. Her decomposing body remained at a medical examiner's office in Dania Beach, Florida.

Arthur wants Smith buried in her native Texas.

The estate of the former topless dancer and billionaire's widow could ultimately be worth millions if it wins a legal battle over the estate of her late husband, billionaire oil tycoon J. Howard Marshall.

Miami lawyer Richard Milstein, who was appointed as Dannielynn's guardian, said he was arranging to bury Smith beside her son Daniel, who died last year, in the Bahamas.

In Nassau, lawyers for Arthur and Smith's former boyfriend Larry Birkhead, who says he is the baby's biological father, went to court for a hearing in the custody fight. *Reuters*

Iraq VP survives assassination try

BAGHDAD—IRAQ'S SHIITE VICE PRESIDENT and a cabinet minister were wounded in an apparent assassination attempt on Monday when a bomb killed six people at a ministry in Baghdad where they were attending a ceremony.

Police said Public Works Minister Riad Ghareeb, also a Shiite, was seriously wounded when the bomb exploded in a meeting hall.

Aides to Vice President Adel Abdul-Mahdi said he escaped with light shrapnel wounds. One police source said the death toll could be as high as 12. The bomb wounded 31 people.

Prime Minister Nuri Maliki, under pressure to quell violence threatening to plunge the country into all-out civil war, vowed to hunt down those responsible for the attack.

Iraqi leaders are often targeted by militants on either side of the sectarian divide. The ministry attack came despite a major new US-backed crackdown aimed at ridding Baghdad's lawless streets of Sunni Arab insurgents and Shiite militias.

One witness told Reuters the force of the blast had thrown Abdul-Mahdi against a wall at the ministry, in the Sunni Arab neighborhood of Mansour in western Baghdad.

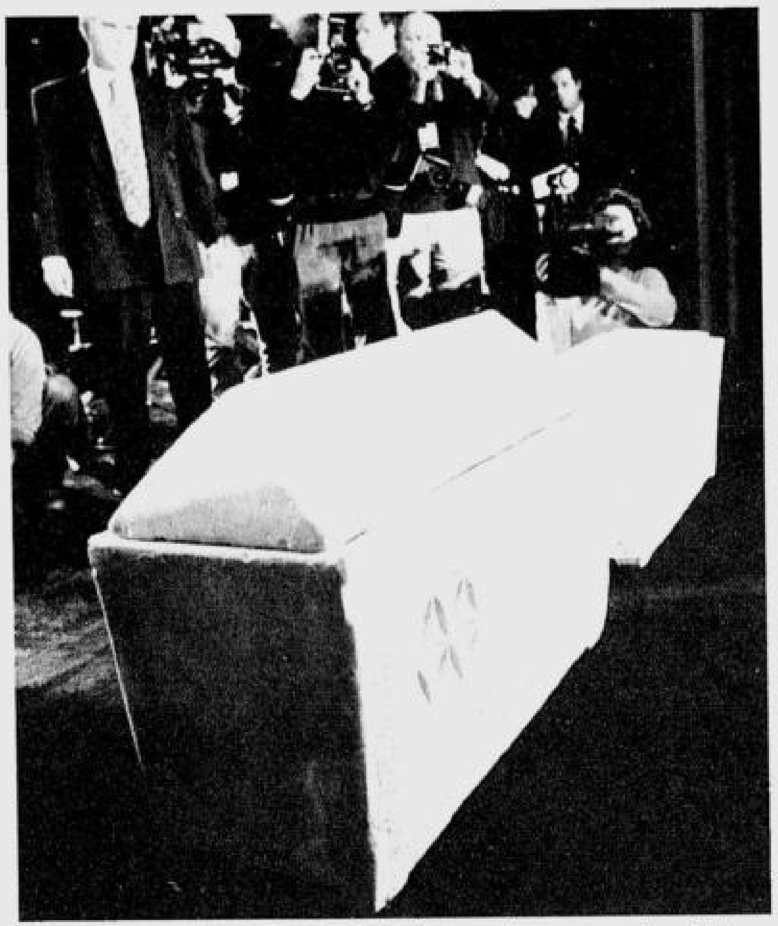
"All his guards threw themselves on top of him," he said.

His aides said he was later discharged from hospital.

"He has light shrapnel wounds in different parts of his body but it is not serious," a political source from the ruling Shiite Alliance said, referring to the vice president.

Abdul-Mahdi is one of Iraq's two vice presidents. The other is Tareq al-Hashemi, a Sunni Arab. *Reuters*

Film docu to show lost tomb of Jesus Christ



MEMBERS of the media in New York photograph two ossuaries said to have been found in a 2,000-year-old tomb in Talpiot Jerusalem in 1980 that may have held the bones of Jesus and Mary Magdalene Feb. 26. REUTERS

A DOCUMENTARY BY THE DIScovery Channel claims to provide evidence that a crypt unearthed 27 years ago in Jerusalem contained the bones of Jesus of Nazareth.

Moreover, it asserts that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene, that the couple had a son, named Judah, and that all three were buried together.

But the claims were met with skepticism by several archaeologists and New Testament scholars, as well as outrage by some Christian leaders. The contention that Jesus was married, had a child, and left behind his bones—suggesting he was not bodily resurrected—contradicts core Christian doctrine.

Two limestone boxes said to contain residue from the remains of Jesus and Mary Magdalene were unveiled with a flourish at a news conference on Monday at the New York Public Library by the documentary's producer, James Cameron, who made "Titanic" and "The Terminator."

Cameron's collaborators onstage included a journalist, a self-taught antiquities investigator, New Testament scholars, a statistician, and an archaeologist. Several of them said they were excited by the findings but uncertain.

"I would like more information. I remain skeptical," said the archaeologist, Shimon Gibson, a senior fellow at the W.F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research in Jerusalem, in an interview after the news conference. "This is exploiting the whole trend that caught on with 'The Da Vinci Code,'" said Lawrence E. Stager, the Dorot professor of archaeology of Israel at Harvard, in a telephone interview. "One of the problems is there are so many biblically illiterate people around the world that they don't know what is real judicious assessment and what is what some of us in the field call 'fantastic archaeology.'"

Stager said he had not seen the film but was skeptical.

The documentary, "The Lost Tomb of Jesus," revisits a site discovered by archaeologists from the Israel Antiquities Authority in the East Talpiyot neighborhood of Jerusalem in 1980, when the area was being excavated for a building.

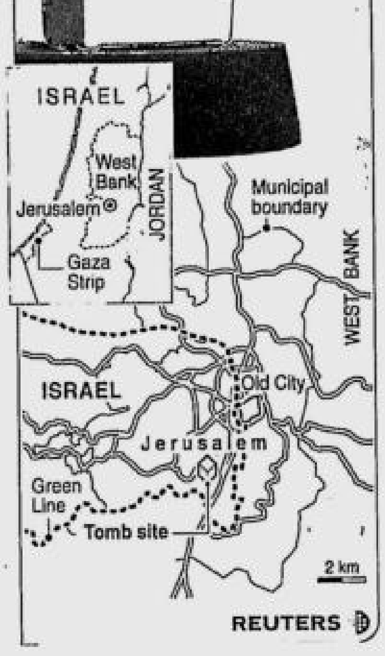
Ten burial boxes, or ossuaries, were found in the tomb, and six of them had inscriptions. The documentary's case rests in large part on the interpretation of the inscriptions, which they say are Jesus, Mary, Mary Magdalene, Matthew, Joseph, and Judah. *NYT*

JESUS TOMB

The director of the movie "Titanic" has presented what he said was evidence the tomb of Jesus had been uncovered, but scholars greeted the assertion with skepticism

▣ Cameron showed two stone ossuaries that he said might have once contained the bones of Jesus and Mary Magdalene

☐ The small caskets were part of 10 found in 1980 in Talpiot, Jerusalem, during construction



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■ Leviste tops World Cup qualifier in Bahrain
/A28

RP quintet to cost ₱70 million

Wedding plans may leave Hatfield out of squad to Seaba, Japan caging

By Musong R. Castillo

HERE'S HOW MUCH IT WILL cost to train the national team straight up to the Fiba-Asia Olympic qualifier in August: P70 million.

That includes, among others, salaries, perks and bonuses, training expenses and plane tickets the team needs to book to compete in the international scene.

Indeed, there will be no discounts as the PBA prepares the team for a possible shot at the Olympics.

There may be no Rudy Hatfield, too.

"It will not be a small amount," PBA commissioner Noli Eala said of the possible budget, which will be shouldered by the PBA teams.

Computed at an average of P350,000 a month for each player's basic pay, which is the league maximum, the teams which lent their players to the RP squad will be forking out at least a combined P29.4 million for talents they won't even be using.

And the proposed budget for training that is up for approval has been pegged at P40 million, up until the end of the Fiba-Asia in Tokoshima, Japan, in the first week of August alone.

Hatfield, though, may miss that Olympic-qualifying event.

The 6-foot-3 workhorse has told the team that the Fiba-Asia tournament runs smack into his wedding plans, which were already finalized as early as last year when the Barangay Ginebra star was filling his days away from basketball honing a new skill in a professional wrestling school.

Hatfield spent time away from the league because of citizenship problems that forced him to return to the United States.

Possible replacement

Should Hatfield choose to push through with the wedding as scheduled, Reyes will have to name his replacement from among the alternates on the roster—Rafi Reavis, Rommel Adducul or Enrico Villanueva.

IF Rudy Hatfield begs off, a substitute must be named quick. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Eala did not go into details as to how the budget will be divvied up, but the INQUIRER learned yesterday about "certain bonus and incentive schemes" which the league had drawn up for each member of the 12-man squad.

The regular team is made up of Asi Taulava, Ren-Ren Ritualo, Jimmy Alapag, Tony dela Cruz, Mick Pennisi, Kerby Raymundo, Dondon Hontiveros, Danny Seigle, Ranidel de Ocampo, Jay-Jay Helterbrand, Mark Caguioa and whoever replaces Hatfield.

Team's big sacrifice

Under the scheme, each player shall receive his salary from his respective mother clubs, quite a sacrifice to the teams considering that the players will be pulled out for the Fiesta Conference and will dedicate themselves solely to national cause.

Part of it also calls for the players in the RP team to also receive their won-game bonuses from their mother teams who win the Fiesta Conference even if they don't play.

The RP team's budget committee is made up of Eala, Red Bull team manager Tony Chua, San Miguel Corp. executive Robert Non and PBA board chair Ricky Vargas of Smart/PLDT.

Expected approval

They are expected to approve the budget without a hitch since this was also applied during the 2002 Busan Asian Games, where the last all-pro, all-star team was sent under coach Jong Uichico.

The new RP Team will go to the United States for a two-week training camp in April before heading to Australia to play in an invitational tournament and then to the Southeast Asian Basketball Association championship.

After the Seaba, a European tour has been scheduled before a stint in the Qatar Invitational in late June. The preparations will wind up with a tournament in Manila before the team flies to Japan about a week before the Fiba-Asia scheduled July 28-Aug. 5.

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Ginebra, P'foods collide in Dubai

THE PHILIPPINE Basketball Association marks another historic first when it holds an official game in Dubai pitting two of the pro league's hottest properties, Barangay Ginebra and Purefoods.

"We are very honored and excited to play one of our regular games in the beautiful country of Dubai," commissioner Noli Eala said.

"Rest assured that we're going to give our thousands of *kababayans* there the high quality of basketball the league has been known for throughout the years."

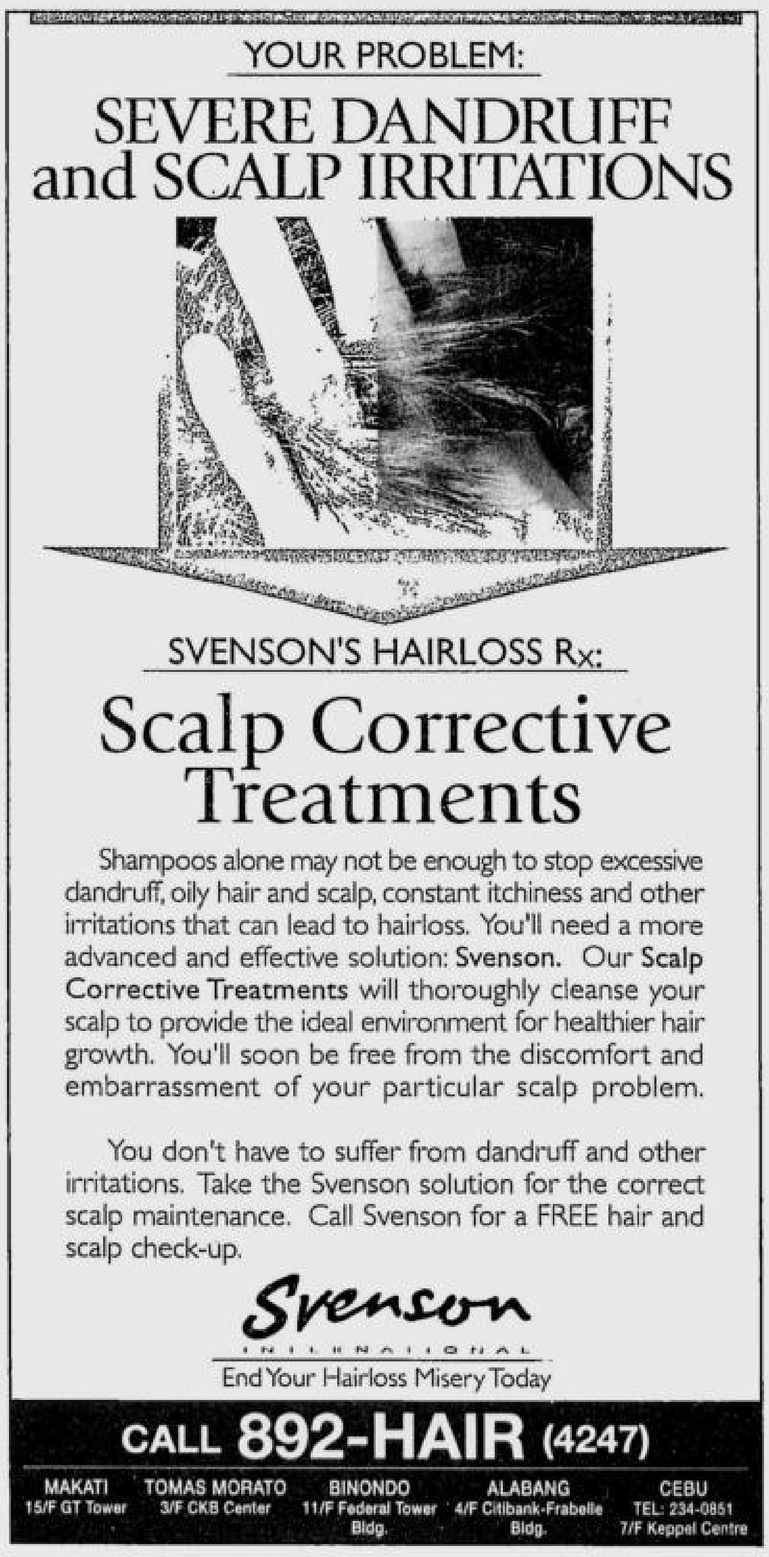
The match is set on April 13 at the Al-Ahli Sports Club.

The Dubai encounter is the featured out-of-the country game of the Fiesta Cup that begins this Sunday at the Cuneta Astrodome.

Red Bull is the defending champion.

Sorties in Indonesia, Hong Kong and Guam were held in the recent past and the league aims to go to more places in the future.

Musong R. Castillo



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Beermen still without an import, Chot's substitute

By Musong R. Castillo

SAN MIGUEL BEER, THE RUNNER-UP to Barangay Ginebra in the Talk 'N Text Philippine Cup, is the only side without an import just five days before the Fiesta Conference opens this Sunday.

And the Beermen's worries do not end there. They have yet to name an interim coach.

Team officials have yet to name who will take over Chot Reyes at the helm, even as six new faces debut as imports with James Penny leading two other returnees.

Reyes had said that his replacement could likely come from among his assistants—Aboy Castro, Biboy Ravanes or Pido Jarencio.

Penny, the ultrasmart NBA veteran who helped Red Bull dispatch Purefoods in the Finals here last year, returns for another tour of duty with the Barako, who will now be able to plug the hole left by Lordy Tugade.

Burly Shawn Daniels will again suit up for the Air21 Express, even as southpaw Rossell Ellis comes back for the Alaska Aces.

San Miguel Beer, meanwhile, does not have a reinforcement in mind. The team will likely take its pick once a new coach is named to take over from Reyes, who was lent to the national team that will play in two tournaments this year.

Kris Gibbs Smith suits up for underachieving Sta. Lucia Realty, Anthony Johnson will be Coca-Cola's main man, Charles Colonel Clark has been tapped by newcomer Welcoat, Jesse King will spearhead Purefoods, JJ Sillinger struts his stuff for Talk 'N Text, while Rod Nealy will try to prove his worth with the Gin Kings.

Nealy, a 6-foot-6 European League veteran, planes in today and Ginebra coach Jong Uichico told the INQUIRER over the phone that the import would have to prove himself quick.

"Remember that we signed him (Nealy) on the premise that my team would be intact," Uichico said. "But now that we are bound to lose some of our players, Nealy would have to be very good to stay (as Ginebra import)."

Rudy Hatfield, Jay-Jay Helterbrand and Mark Caguioa have been tapped to play for the Philippine team and will not be available for Ginebra in the coming tournament.

Chris Porter, the high-flying import who led the Kings to the Fiesta title two years ago, reportedly secured a bigger contract from his team in the Chinese pro league and is reluctant to leave.

Tigers best Lions as Duncil shines

By Jasmine W. Payo

UAAP CHAMPION UNIVERSITY OF Santo Tomas did more than just hand a loss to NCAA titlist San Beda Lions.

UST coach Pido Jarencio also shared a piece of advice to rookie San Beda mentor Frankie Lim after the showdown between the two collegiate powerhouses.

"As long as the talent and potential are there, the confidence will be there," said Jarencio after the Tigers nipped the Lions, 74-71, in the "Unity in Sports" showdown Sunday night at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium.

"I told him (Lim), 'welcome to the club,'" added Jarencio. "Before, if you're just thinking of your family, now you have 12 more (players), plus your coaching staff to think about."

And Jarencio's focus did show in the game.

Still fiery at the sidelines, Jarencio again drew big performances from his key men led by UAAP MVP Jojo Duncil, who shot 23 points.

Jervy Cruz, last year's rookie standout, also added 12 markers.

Duncil shot 11 points in the final period, including three from the stripe in the last 33 seconds, as the Tigers rallied from a 53-61 deficit.

The Lions had a chance to forge a draw in the exhibition match but Rogemar Menor's triple rimmed out at the buzzer.

The scores:

UST 74—Duncil 23, Cruz 12, Espiritu 8, Canlas 8, Cuan 3, Cortez 3, Soriano 2, Ababou 2, Gile 1, Dizon 1, Scott 0, Mirza 0.

SAN BEDA 71—Menor 28, Tecson 14, Suguitan 12, Taganas 6, Espinosa 3, Tirona 2, Maggay 2, Galinato 2, Angeles 2, Villanueva 0, Castillo 0, Evangelista 0, Sarangay 0.

Quarters: 16-15, 35-34, 53-56, 74-71

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(PDI-Feb. 28, 2007)

Tap your free agents, Romero tells PBA chiefs

By Jasmine W. Payo

A RANKING PBL OFFICIAL HAS offered an alternative solution to the contentious PBA apprentice program: Look at your own backyard.

"They (PBA) should give the free agents a chance," Mikee Romero, PBL board treasurer and team owner of 2007 Silver Cup champion Harbour Centre, said at the PSA Forum yesterday at the Pantalan Restaurant.

"The apprentice program is detrimental to the league (PBL)," said Romero. "It might even cause the death of the league. If it's for the national cause, we're more than willing to lend our players. But if it's just for the PBA, there are many free agents that can fill in the slots."

Over a hundred seasoned players are in the PBA's free agent market, including former superstars Vergel Meneses and Nelson Asaytono.

Harbour Centre main man JC Intal is among the marquee amateurs the PBA is trying to lure to the apprentice draft that will allow young hopefuls to see action in the Fiesta Cup without going through the regular rookie draft.

MIKEE Romero (left) explains the PBL's stance on the PBA's apprentice program, as POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, Chavit Singson, governor of Ilocos Sur which is hosting the Olympic Festival on March 5, and POC chair Robert Aventajado (partly hidden) look on.

Through the apprentice program, the country's top young cagers may see action in the PBA as replacements for the 12 pro cagers tapped to join the national team recently formed by coach Chot Reyes.

The PBL already turned down the program on Monday, leaving PBA teams to choose from 24 untested players who have signed up for the draft slated on March 1.

PBL commissioner Chino Trinidad said the apprentice program is "not applicable at this point" due to the live contract of key players and after schools pulled out some collegiate players from the PBL.

Romero also announced that Harbour will sport a new moniker—"Batang Pier"—when it vies for a third straight championship in the Unity Cup starting March 24.

"We want to be identified more with the masses," said Romero. "We're surprised that we have a growing fan base even in the Visayas and Mindanao."

PBA, comments from a poet

BARE EYE

Recab Trinidad

Here are observations, timely wake-up comments on the recent Barangay Ginebra-San Miguel Beer championship series from a treasured poet-friend.

* * *

"I'VE NEVER HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO watch a PBA game live; I prefer to cut costs and view it instead on the small screen with all the visuals to tell me the game must be exciting. The morning after, I would read an accounting of it—and clearly see the great disparity between stale prose and the actual action itself.

"So when coach Chot Reyes aired, rather diplomatically, his displeasure about the fouls his team was supposed to have incurred and hinted that if only the calls were fair …

"Reyes I don't know personally, but as a lecturer in management and social relations, he must have been distressed by what he implied was officiating that smacked of, in the words of a disgruntled Danny Ildefonso, '*luto, luto* (fixed).'

"I share this sentiment.

* * *

"Most of the write-ups tended to dismiss this area of concern, as though it were unavoidable, a usual part of the game. (Like their judicial counterparts, the referees are beyond suspicion, their verdict objective, precise, nonpartisan. But aren't there hoodlums in robes?)

"When Hontiveros was decked by an elbow of one mercurial coach, a columnist would simply note this guy's 'colorful personality.' I know some of these broadcasters are beholden to the PBA, and, I suppose, ABC, but do they have to sound like damage-control factotums?

"Rarely do they admit that a call was bad, or could determine the endgame. They would rather play it safe and claim instead that 'the referees are nearer to the action.'

"Ha-ha! So their annotation is, most of the time, as worthless as a bleacher fan's?

* * *

"I learned much about the game—no matter how inadequate—from reading the late Fred Luarca of Sports News, who would technically assess a player's worth or the game's strategy and tactical error.

"Now, we have only bad prose and general statements like 'more energy, more hustle, less error,' as if these were not obvious enough to win a match. But how do you qualify energy in relation to a game when refs can intervene in the process?

"If only there were technicians who can disassemble a game as though it were a toy and show us why the contraption functions well, or not.

"The other night, Tommy Manotoc was making sense, dissecting the game with a clinical eye. But it would seem that he pulled his punches, seemingly contaminated by the other panelists.

"We need analysts, not PR guys. And sports reporters who do not syndicate a common news piece, or rework the same sound byte.

"Keep on punching, as the late Joe Cantada would say."

The letter-sender, Edel E. Garcellano, teaches literature at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City.

PANGAEA CUP

16 nines in slo-pitch tilt

DEFENDING CHAMPION FATBOYZ-Guzzlers from the United States and squads from South Korea head 16 teams seeing action in the Pangaea Cup 2007 International Slo-pitch Tournament which blasts off Friday at the Alabang Country Club in Muntinlupa.

The Americans open defense of their title against Tong Hua in the six-team Super Division before going up against former champion and last year's runner-up Cebuana Lhuillier in the second game, both in Field 1.

Other matches will be played simultaneously in Fields 2 and 3.

The rest of the Division 1 teams are Sta. Fe Blok Mads from Indonesia, Fu Sheng from Taiwan, and Just 1 More from Saudi Arabia.

Completing the schedule in Field 1 are the marches pitting Sta. Fe Blok Mads against Fu Sheng, Just 1 More versus Tong Hwa 2, Cebuana Lhuillier against Fu Sheng, and Sta. Fe Blok Mads versus Just 1 More.

The other teams entered in the men's division are Taipei Typhoons Bombsquad, Typhoons, and Tong Hwa 2, all from Taiwan; the Turkeys and Sta. Fe Gas House from Hong Kong, Premier Hedgehogs from Tokyo, Guzzleros from Korea, Singapore's River Rats, and local teams Meralco Sluggers and Manila Gorillas.

The three-day tournament is one of the major slo-pitch events in Asia.

Adamson bags fourth straight softball crown

THE ADAMSON LADY FALCONS went to work like the true champions that they are, beating the Lady Maroons of the University of the Philippines, 7-4, yesterday to nail their fourth straight UAAP softball crown at the Rosario Sports Complex in Pasig City.

Denied of a title sweep in the eliminations by the Lady Maroons, the Lady Falcons scored five runs in the first five innings yesterday and then foiled a UP uprising in the last two to win their eighth league title.

The Lady Falcons were outhit in the first game of the best-of-three finals and lost, 3-2, but came back in the second by blanking the Lady Maroons, 3-0, and sending the series to a decider.

Adamson's Yocel Aguilar was named Most Valuable Player, Best Hitter and Best Striker, while teammate Chat Ditchon took Rookie of the Year honors. Lady Falcons Sarah Jane Agravante and Chat Ditchon shared the Most Home Runs award, while Cloiene Muyco was named Best Pitcher.

Omega Cup tees off tomorrow at Wack Wack

THE OMEGA CUP PHILIPPINES 2007, FEAturing local pros and golfing celebrities, fires off tomorrow at Wack Wack's east course with a total prize money of P660,000 up for grabs.

Mars Pucay, who outlasted Robert Pactolerin in a thrilling eight-hole playoff to win last year's title, heads the chase for the top P120,000 prize in the pro side of the tournament sponsored by Omega. An Omega Chronoscope is at stake as hole-in-one prize.

Oliver Hugentobler, regional sales manager for Omega; Ivan Yao, president of Swiss Prestige Holdings, Inc. the local agent for Omega; actor-sportsman Richard Gomez, Comelec chair Benjamin Abalos, Wack Wack president Luis Tan and Pucay will hit the ceremonial drives to kick off the shotgun tee off at 11 a.m. on Thursday and Friday.

Aside from Pactolerin, others fancied to foil Pucay's back-to-back title bid are Gerald Rosales, who finished runner-up to Frankie Miñoza in the recent Philippine Open, Artemio Murakami, Jerome Delariarte, Cassius Casas and Elmer Salvador, who finished second to Angelo Que in the just concluded Razon Cup at The Country Club.

Each of the 36 invited pros will be paired with one celebrity and two VIPs in the four-man, best-ball pro-celebrity side of the tournament.

O'Neal reaches 25,000 points in losing effort

NEW YORK—SHAQUILLE O'NEAL WENT over the 25,000-point mark for his NBA career during the Miami Heat's 99-93 loss to the New York Knicks on Monday.

He quickly got the five points he needed to reach 25,000 for his career. He is the top scorer among active players, 14th overall in NBA history, and the seventh to reach 25,000 points and 10,000 rebounds.

The milestone basket came with 6:04 left in the first quarter when he muscled Knicks forward Malik Rose in the paint, backed him up and then scored over him.

O'Neal finished with 20 points but he made only one of two free throws with 43.7 seconds remaining when he could have tied it.

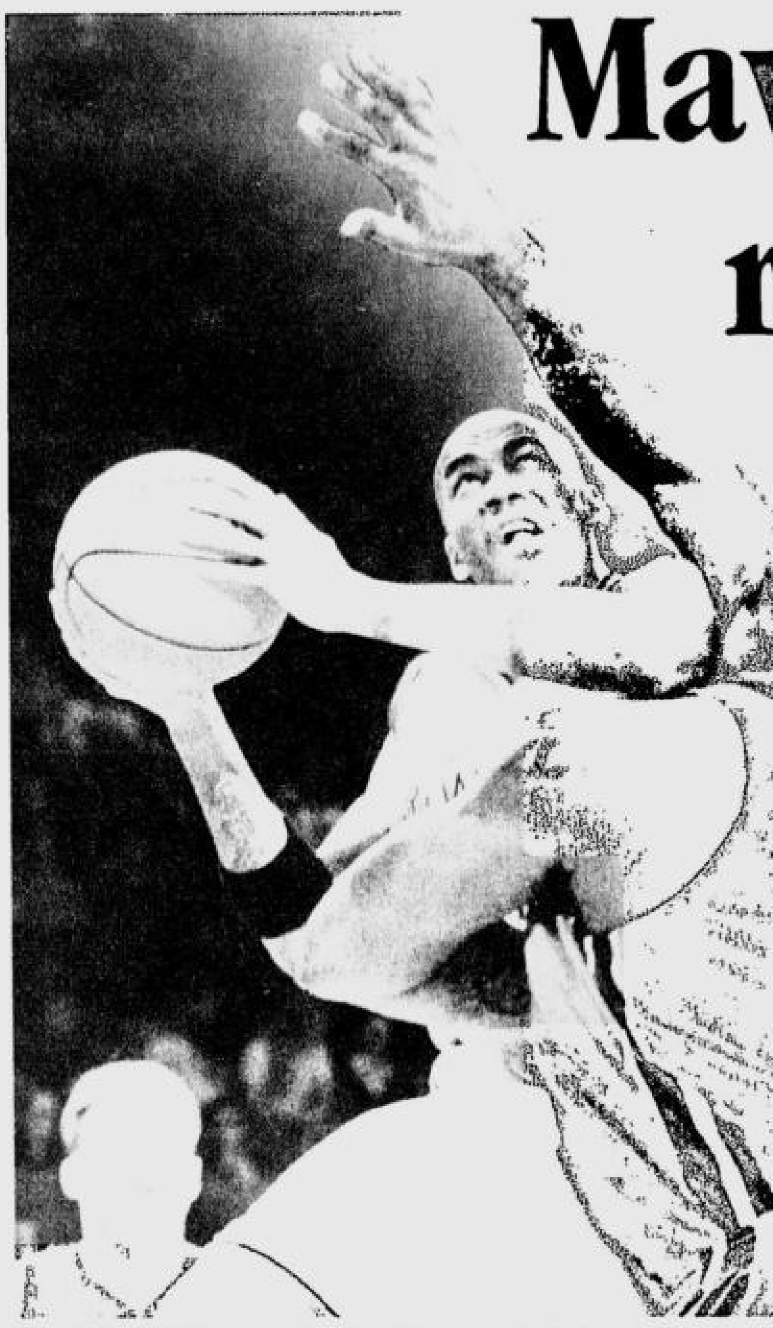
"I am kind of disappointed in myself because if I make free throws I'd be at 30,000 rather than 25,000," O'Neal said.

The 15-year NBA veteran is the first to hit the scoring milestone since Indiana's Reggie Miller in March 2005. O'Neal, limited to just 17 of Miami's first 56 games this season because of a knee injury, came in with 11,193 rebounds.

He joins Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Karl Malone, Wilt Chamberlain, Moses Malone, Elvin Hayes, and Hakeem Olajuwon as those with 25,000 points and 10,000 rebounds.

The Heat are counting on O'Neal to carry them down the stretch while leading scorer Dwyane Wade is sidelined because of a dislocated left shoulder. Miami went 18-21 without O'Neal this season.

Wade is expected to join the team at the White House on Tuesday, when they are honored for winning last season's NBA championship, and then visit a doctor the following day to get another opinion on his shoulder. *AP*



SHAQUILLE O' Neal and the Miami Heat take it flush on the chin from Stephon Marbury and the New York Knicks. REUTERS

Mavericks stretch run, rip Hawks

DALLAS—THE DALLAS MAVERICKS EXTENDED THEIR FRANchise-record home winning streak to 20 games with a 110-87 thrashing of the Atlanta Hawks on Monday, easing to a victory that was also their 12th straight overall.

Dirk Nowitzki led the way with 27 points and eight rebounds for the Mavericks to help Dallas improve to 27-3 at home with their 47th victory in 52 games after starting the season 0-4.

Jason Terry added 21 points for the winners, who are one of just four teams in NBA history to have three winning streaks of 10 or more games in the same season.

Dallas already enjoyed a 13-game streak and another 12-game run earlier this year.

It may have been a costly victory for the Mavericks, however, as Josh Howard left the game with a sprained right ankle with 6:11 to play after scoring 20 points.

Howard was already playing with a sore ankle and had to be helped off the court after diving for a loose ball. He is listed as day-to-day but did make the trip with the team to Minnesota after the game.

"Hopefully he'll be OK," Dallas coach Avery Johnson told reporters.

The Hawks had won six of their previous eight road games, but were overmatched against the Mavericks, who have the best record in the NBA.

"Dallas is good, they try to do things the right way," Atlanta coach Mike Woodson said. "They have so many weapons, it's like, pick your poison out there."

Jerry Stackhouse added 19 points for the Mavericks, who shot 54 percent from the field and raced into a 60-45 lead at the half.

Joe Johnson led the Hawks with 29 points, while Zaza Pachulia had 24 points and nine rebounds.

In New York, Stephon Marbury scored 25 points as the New York Knicks beat the Miami Heat, 99-93.

"This was a very good win," Knicks coach Isiah Thomas said. "We were pretty gritty tonight. I liked what I saw."

NBA TODAY ON BASKETBALL TV
8 a.m.—Phoenix vs. Indiana (replay @ 6 p.m.)
10:30 a.m.—Dallas vs. Minnesota (replay @ 9:30 p.m.)

FEDERER AP

Federer breaks Connors record

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB Emirates—Roger Federer took over the No. 1 ranking in men's tennis more than three years ago, and he shows no signs of letting it go.

The 10-time Grand Slam champion reached a new milestone Monday when he broke Jimmy Connors' 30-year-old mark with his 161st week at the top of the ATP rankings.

"This is definitely something that will stay for quite some time," the 25-year-old Swiss star said. "It's not something you do overnight. It's a long, hardworking process."

Connors set his record from July 1974 to August 1977. The ATP rankings began on Aug. 23, 1973.

"It is a nice record to have," said Federer, who extended his career high winning streak to 37 after beating Kristian Pless, 7-6 (2), 3-6, 6-3, Monday in the first round of the Dubai Open. "I'll definitely keep it for three years."

Federer has been ranked No. 1 since Feb. 2, 2004. He has also won six of the last seven Grand Slam titles, but hasn't played since beating Fernando Gonzalez in the Australian Open final on Jan. 28.

His lack of playing time showed early against Pless, who became the first player to take a set off Federer this season.

Federer has 8,120 points in the yearly rankings, leading Rafael Nadal by 3,415 points. *AP*

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SPORTS

POC to probe 'moonlighters'

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE PHILIPPINE OLYMPIC COMMITtee yesterday said it will conduct an investigation into allegations that some national athletes and coaches moonlight as coaches for private clubs and schools.

POC president Peping Cojuangco announced that the POC will look into the veracity of the reports reportedly made by the Philippine Sports Commission monitoring teams that make periodic visits on the different training venues.

PSC chair Butch Ramirez earlier raised the issue, saying he was concerned about "how much quality time" do some members of Team Philippines have if they divide their time training and earning as coaches or instructors on the side.

This early, the report elicited reactions from some national sports associations, particularly badminton, which has many players and coaches earning as instructors in the courts that mushroomed all over the country.

"They must take in consideration that these athletes and coaches don't get enough from the PSC," said badminton national head coach Errol Chan. "They are not to blame if they want to earn extra."

Though Ramirez said he understands the dire straits the athletes and coaches are in, he voiced out the concern for the national team which is being bankrolled by the government.

However, Ramirez said they are leaving it to the POC and the NSAs to do something about it as they have no direct hand on NSA matters.

All set for Olympic fest

By June Navarro

IDENTIFYING THE TALENTS FOR THE 2012 London Olympics will be the main thrust of the Philippine Olympic Festival set to fire off next month.

A multisports event aimed at tapping talents in the countryside, the second edition of the POF will kick off in Vigan, Ilocos Sur, on March 5-11.

The Vigan leg will be the first of five elimination stages, which will culminate in the national championships at the end of the year.

"The POF will give our sports programs a sense of direction with the POC and the LGUs taking an active role in identifying talents," said POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco.

According to POC chair Robert Aventajado, the partnership between the POC and the LGUs would hopefully produce world-class athletes who will don the national colors in the 2012 Games.

"It's actually a long-term program aimed at producing talents for the 2012 Olympics," said Aventajado.

Around 3,000 athletes and officials are expected to troop to Vigan. The same number is anticipated to join the succeeding regional eliminations.

WORLD CUP QUALIFIER

Leviste tops in Bahrain

TONI Leviste and Globe Platinum Just Jewels hurdle the bar in perfect form.

WHEN TONI LEVISTE COMPETES, SHE SHUTS HER MIND TO ALL THE DIStractions and focuses on the task at hand.

It came as no surprise then that the Filipino equestrienne dominated the World Cup Jumping qualifiers in Bahrain Friday last week despite the image of her ailing father, former Batangas governor Antonio Leviste, behind bars looming large.

Leviste, aboard her Doha Asian Games mount, Globe Platinum Just Jewels, rode without fault to impress a crowd that included members of royal families in the Gulf states.

She finished with a perfect zero-demerit round as she topped the field of 45 predominantly male Arab riders.

Toni said it was because of her father's insistence that she competed in the World Cup qualifer. The only non-Arab so far to be invited to the tough competition, Leviste did not fail her countrymen who cheered for her at the competition venue.

"Now that my dad is sick in the hospital, I am not sure if I can leave for the last two legs of the competition, which will be held in Doha, Qatar, and Damascus, Syria, respectively," said Toni.

"I will try my best. I don't want to disappoint my dad. These are trying times, but I am doing my best to keep my focus."

Toni was jumping at the grand prix competition when she heard the news that her father, who is detained at the Makati City Jail for the alleged murder of his longtime aide, was rushed to the hospital for low blood pressure and gastrointestinal bleeding.

When she arrived from Bahrain yesterday, Toni immediately proceeded to the Makati Medical Center to be with her father.

There, she broke the news of her victory in the prestigious World Cup Arab League event.

"It is a great honor to carry the Philippine flag in the Middle East, where so many OFWs (overseas Filipino workers) are based," said Toni. "Being in their company while they cheer for you is a humbling experience.

"It is a privilege to make them proud of their fellow Filipino."

Her dear father, too. *Roy Luarca*

Golden Wheel Award fetes top drivers tonight

JODY COSETENG IS TAGGED THE TOP FAVORITE, but Glenn Aguilar, Jolet Jao and Matteo Guidicelli aren't too far behind.

One of them will be crowned the National Driver of the Year when the 4th annual Golden Wheel Award is held tonight at the Pagcor Theater-Airport Casino Filipino.

Automobile Association Philippines (AAP) Executive Director Mandy Eduque and Macky Carapiet of the National Motorcycle Sports and Safety Association (Namssa) will join Golden Wheel chair and Philippine Motorsports godfather Johnny Tan in paying tribute to the top motorsports achievers in 2006.

Coseteng's bid is anchored on his 10th straight Philippine Touring Car championship.

Jao, however, also boasts 10 titles in road racing and so did Aguilar in motocross championship.

Karter of the Year Guidicelli, on the other hand, could give his veteran rivals a strong fight for the Golden Wheel for his down-the-wire victory against Marlon Stockinger in the 2006 Shell Superkarting Series.

Other champion drivers who will also be feted in the four-hour extravaganza starting at 7 p.m. are Tyson Sy (Asian Formula 3), Marlon Stockinger (Asian Karting), Jaime Barcial (Underbone), Dave Jota (Drag Racing), Alex Perez (Drifting), Neil Andaya (4x4 OffRoad) and Noel Rivera (Slalom).

Club awards will also be given to the winners of the 2006 Asian Formula 3, 2006 Batangas Grand Prix, 2006 NASFOR 4x4 OffRoad Racing and the 2006 Shell Superkarting Series.

For info, call the Batangas Racing Circuit (Nelson Gayola, Dinnie Rivera, Sherwin Mojica) at 729-5365 or Carmona Circuit Phils. (Rose Feria) at 817-2241.

Mendoza, Dysangco join Clark duathlon

ASIAN DUATHLON CHAMPION RYAN MENdoza will try to boost his stock in the second leg of the Clark 2007 Sprint Duathlon Series this Sunday at the Clark Special Economic Zone.

Mendoza, who ruled the inaugural leg of the series, is hoping to don the country's colors in the Southeast Asian Games in Thailand late this year.

The race is one of four qualifying tournaments for the national duathlon team. The remaining qualifiers are the Asian Duathlon Championship in Thailand in March and the National Duathlon Championship in June.

Annalissa Dysangco, the women's champion in the first leg, will also be at the starting line at 7 a.m. And Dysangco remains all fired up after capturing the women's 21K crown of the Milo Marathon regional leg in Tarlac just a week ago.

Other seeded entries include national training team members Jeff Valdez and Augusto Benedicto, junior racer John Dalayoan, seasoned duathlete Marissa Nagtalon-Remigio, former triathlon champion Kaye Lopez and Monica Torres.

Triathlon Association of the Philippines (Trap) president Tom Carrasco Jr. said that the event, hosted by Clark Development Corporation, will also feature a 7.5K run-30K bike-5K sprint race.

According to Melvin Fausto of CMG, participants will be racing through grueling flat, uphill and downhill race routes.

There will also be age group competitions for 16 to over 60-year-old racers in the men's division. Young duathletes can also take part in the 1K run-10K bike-1K run in the 7-10 and 11-15 age group duathlon competitions.

Registration is on-going. An entry fee of P600 is offered until March 2. Walk-in participants will be charged P800. The entry fee for the kids' duathlon race is P300. TRAP members may avail of a 10 percent discount. *Jasmine W. Payo*

SPORTSWATCH

Milo Bukidnon cage clinic

THE MILO BEST CENTER, THE LONGEST RUNning basketball clinic in the country, will hold its first-ever workshop for boys and girls 9 years and older in Bukidnon on May 21-27 at the Barangay 4 court in Malaybalay City. Florence Subido, chief organizer of the event, is expecting a record turnout. Malaybalay Mayor Florencio Flores said some 150 students will attend the May 28-June 2 batch.

SJC Cockers derby is on

BIG-TIME COCKFIGHTING RAGES ANEW AT THE San Juan Coliseum via the SJC Cockers Club 4-cock derby series sponsored by Sagupaan Complexor 3000. Today's 70-fight program will feature the club's winningest fighters. Meanwhile, participants in the National Rambulan 8-Cock Derby, the much-awaited super cockfest with P10.5 million up for grabs, must submit entries at SJC office today, from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. only.

'Largahan' finals today

THE CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND OF THE "LARGAhan" 5-Cock Derby kicks off at 10 a.m. today at Roligon Mega Cockpit. Over 200 fights presented by Lakpue Drug Inc. and Thunderbird Enertone are on the roster. Finalists will vie for the top prize of P2 million put up by host Rolly Ligon. The fastest winner will drive home a 1.5-liter Toyota Avanza. Sixty participants with 2 wins each and 30 new entries banner today's lineup.

RACING 1/2/3

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Tucker Pride (8), Congreetly (7), Be Faithful (4), Might Of The Wind/Flirt Of The Wind (5)
Race 2—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)— Interceptor (9), Coat Of Arms (3), Road Runner (8), Boss Lady (1), Just A Moment (7)
Race 3—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Chabacana (10), Run Like D'Wind (6), Tellmenolies (9), House Of Riches (11), King's Choice (4), Real Tough (7)
Race 4—(Qrt/Tri)—Pay To See/Red Fancy (1), Strong Boy (5), Striker (2), Grand Fiesta (3)
Race 5—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Shifty (8), Showman (10), Class Action (3), En Gedi (9), Strong Jays (4), Caden Dance (2)
Race 6—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Kambro (9), Quick Play (2), Selfmade (6), Carmelita (1), Refreshing (4)
Race 7—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Eskapo (2), Xtreme Heat (9), Angie Gray (7), Mes Monique (4), Dato's Pride (3)
Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—I Dont Dance (7), Ole!Ole!Ole! (12), Fernan Ikaw Pa Rin (2), Graceful Conqueror (6), Imperial Manila (9), Terminator (13)

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Gov't to condone ₱42B in agrarian loans

ETON Properties president Danilo Ignacio and Harry Tan during the launching of the Lucio Tan property firm at the Batanes room in Edsa Shangri-la. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Move expected to spur rural dev't

By Doris C. Dumlao

MALACAÑANG HAS PROPOSED TO CONDONE as much as P42 billion worth of agrarian loans to farmers by next year as part of an overall strategy to spur countryside development.

Presidential Chief of Staff Joey Salceda told reporters that these agrarian loans were now considered as "non-performing" and should be written off by the national government.

He said a task force would be created to work on the condonation of the agrarian loans as part of measures "to accelerate the trickle down and optimize the impact of growth on poverty reduction."

This year, Salceda said the government would focus on boosting rural infrastructure, increasing public spending on health to benefit eight million indigents as well as on education, distribute 150,000 hectares under the land reform program and stimulate

GOV'T/ B2

Tan forays into booming property sector

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

TYCOON LUCIO TAN IS VENTURING into the booming property sector through publicly listed Balabac Resources and Holdings Co. Inc., which has been renamed Eton Properties Philippines Inc.

The airline and tobacco magnate is initially breaking into the highly competitive condominium market by banking on his group's extensive land holdings.

Eton Properties is in talks on a possible joint-venture project with flag carrier Philippine Airlines Inc., also owned by Tan, to develop PAL's 1,732-square-meter head office on Legaspi Street, Makati City, into a 39-story, high-end residential condominium, company president Danilo Ignacio said in a briefing yesterday.

The blueprint for "Eton Greenbelt Residences," which is expected to become PAL's head office as well, consists of 1-, 2- and 3-bedroom units, with prices starting at roughly P4 million. The property is across from the Greenbelt mall.

Ignacio also said Eton Properties would enter into joint ventures with other Tan-owned companies like Philippine National Bank and Allied Bank to develop their foreclosed pieces of property.

Initially identified for development into residential condominiums or BPO office buildings are four lots with an area of about 7,000 square meters at the Ortigas central business district (owned by PNB) and a lot at the corner of Roxas Boulevard and T.M. Kalaw in Manila (owned by Allied Bank).

Another 36 hectares in Mactan, Cebu, the former Coral Reef Resort that was foreclosed by PNB, will also be developed into a hotel, residential, leisure and retirement project.

The Tan Group also owns a one-hectare property (the former Squibb office) along Pasong Tamo, Makati, which may be converted into a mixed-use development, and a 10-hectare property along Edsa corner Quezon Avenue for a possible mall, residential condominium and BPO buildings.

The Tan Group also has 1,000 hectares of land in Sta. Rosa and Cabuyao, Laguna, which may be turned into a township that consists of commercial, residential, leisure and hotel development.

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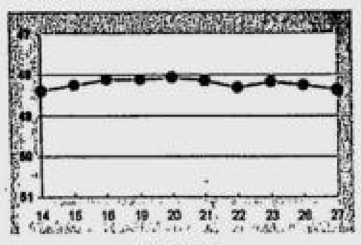

FEBRUARY

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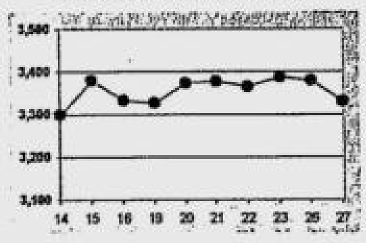
STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B4)

Shares close 1.44% lower

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 1.44-PERCENT lower yesterday on investor concern over rising oil prices, dealers said.

They said most blue chips ended in the red, led by Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT), although last-minute bargain-hunting lifted rival Globe Telecom Inc. and other stocks.

The composite index lost 48.71 points, its biggest single-day drop in four weeks, to

SHARES/ B3

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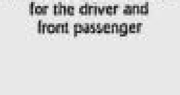

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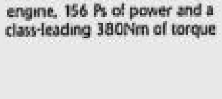

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Imports fell 1.3% in Dec. to $4.16B

By Michelle V. Remo

THE COUNTRY'S IMPORTS FELL BY 1.3 PERcent to $4.16 billion in December, pulled down largely by the lower demand for telecommunication and transport equipment.

The December figure, however, brought the total imports for 2006 higher by 8.7 percent to $51.52 billion from a year ago.

With exports at $47.04 billion in 2006, the country's balance of trade recorded a deficit of $4.48 billion, narrower than the $6.16 billion the previous year.

Balance of trade is the difference between revenues generated from exports and the amount spent for imports. A trade deficit means a country spends more for imports than what it earns from exports.

But in the case of the Philippines, analysts said a growth in imports was not a cause for too much concern because a significant portion of these are raw materials and intermediate goods. A rise in imports usually signals growth in exports and domestic production in the succeeding months.

Dennis Arroyo, director for policy and planning at the National Economic and Development Authority, earlier said the country's imports were expected to post a 12-percent growth this year.

He said imports and exports were likely to keep growing due to an expected rise in demand for electronics, the country's main export product.

Electronics imports, which still accounted for the biggest share of the country's imports bill, reached $2.08 billion. This represented a 0.1-percent growth from a year ago, slower than the 8.8-percent year-on-year growth recorded in November.

Data from the National Statistics Office showed that the decline in imports of telecommunication and transport equipment in December resulted in a reversal of the 13.4-percent year-on-year growth registered in November.

Imports of telecommunication equipment and electrical machinery reached $64.77 million, down 19.7 percent year-on-year, marking the biggest drop among imported goods.

Alvin Arogo, analyst at Unicapital Securities Inc., said in an interview that the drop in these imports indicated that the telecommunication industry might already be headed for a decelerated, if not flat, growth this year.

Imports of cereal and cereal preparation were down 12.2 percent to $51.24 million, while imports of chemicals fell 9.4 percent to $60.26 million. Imports of transport equipment declined by 6.6 percent to $204.44 million.

Arogo said, however, that the decline in December imports could not yet be a basis of what the trend would be for this year.

"It is still hard to tell where foreign exchange rate will be headed so it is difficult to use the one-month data to make a conclusion (on how the country's external trade performance for this year would look like)," Arogo said.

Exchange rate movement affects external trade. An appreciation of the peso makes imported goods cheaper, therefore encouraging more imports. But it likewise makes locally made goods less competitive when these are exported.

Other major imports for December were mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials, $558.3 million; industrial machinery and equipment, $153.88 million; textile yarn, fabrics and related materials, $88.52 million; iron and steel, $82.73 million; and plastics, $74.83 million.

Gov't to condone ₱42B worth of agrarian loans

From page B1

lending to small and medium enterprises and microentrepreneurs.

In 2008, he said plans have been drawn up to create new jobs, condone agrarian loans covering six million hectares and distribute another 150,000 hectares of agrarian land.

By 2009, the distribution of another 150,000 hectares of agrarian land would continue.

But Finance Secretary Margarito Teves is not too keen on the proposed condonation, saying this might have a detrimental impact on government financial institutions.

"Besides, farmers are good borrowers," he said.

Teves chairs the state-owned Land Bank of the Philippines, which was created in 1963 to serve as the financing arm of the agrarian reform program. He was the bank president for five years before being named finance secretary.

He said that Land Bank's repayment rate for existing agrarian reform loans was currently high at about 95-100 percent.

Huge advances for the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) remained as one of the bank's major institutional challenges. Due to the government's inadequate budget for the program, the bank has been advancing payment to landowners. These advances have amounted to P2.89 billion.

Landbank also shoulders about P600 million worth of CARP-related manpower and other operating expenses each year.

Alfonso Cruz, executive vice president at Landbank, said the impact of the proposed condonation on the bank should be "negligible" because all CARP-related exposure was off-balance sheet items.

"This means that whatever amount of money that goes to agrarian reform, we collect from the national government, so if there's any condonation, it also affects their own pocket," Cruz said.

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Guijo St. SILANGAN SUBD. Deparo
Min Bid Price: P 572,000

SPR_CAL372 RSDL LOT
L.A. 1,279sqm
F. Llano St. DAMONG MALIIT Novaliches (Near Ina ng Bayan Church)
Min Bid Price: P 2,175,000

SPR_CAL373 2-STRY HSE & LOT
L.A. 249sqm F.A. 320sqm
Golden Clarion St. (Near City Hall) LILLES VILLE Subd. Ph2, Camarin
Min Bid Price: P 2,550,000

SPR_CAL363 RSDL LOT
L.A. 3,401sqm
(Near Ma. Theresa Avila Schl) Ph-3 & 4 TIERRA NOVA ROYAL, Bagumbong

Lot Area	Min Bid Price
58sqm	P 121,800.00
103sqm	P 216,300.00
182sqm	P 382,200.00
284sqm	P 596,400.00

SPR_CAL374 RSDL VACANT LOT
VISTA VERDE NORTH Ph-3, Kaybiga

Lot Area	Min Bid Price
144sqm	P 392,000
156sqm	P 425,000
316sqm	P 860,000
329sqm	P 923,000
249sqm	P 2,550,000

SPR_CAL410 RSDL LOT
L.A. 197sqm
Munich St. (Near Vista Verde North) VISTA VERDE EXEC VILL, Kaybiga
Min Bid Price: P 587,000

VALENZUELA

SPR_ VAL540 4 RSDL LOT
L.A. 1,277.50sqm
M. HERNANDEZ ST. Mabolo (Near Sapang San Roque)
Min Bid Price: P 11,890,000

SPR_ VAL545 WAREHOUSE
L.A. 1,234sqm F.A. 1,340sqm
(Near Regina Cycle Center) KOWLOON COMPD. Bo. Ugong, Mapulang Lupa
Min Bid Price: P 6,428,000

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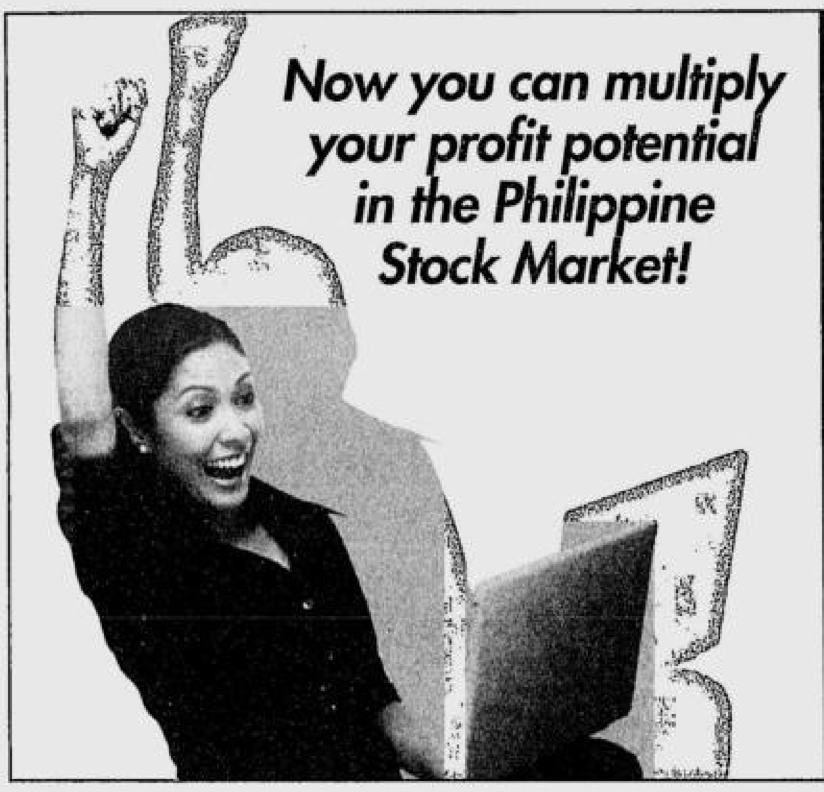

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Shares close 1.44% lower

From page B1

3,331.29 near the day's low of 3,324.95. It touched a high of 3,378.64 earlier in the session.

The broader all-share index fell 29.74 points to 2,135.57.

There were 98 losers and 42 gainers with 31 stocks unchanged. Turnover was 20.9 billion shares worth P5.6 billion.

Concerns over Iran's nuclear program and the cold weather in the northern hemisphere and tightening oil supplies were driving oil prices higher, dealers said.

"Rising oil prices could trigger inflation worries," said Lawrence de Leon of Accord Capital Equities.

The local equity market also "needs to undergo a correction after testing its all-time high a few days ago," he said, adding that he sees immediate support for the main index at 3,300 points. *AFP*

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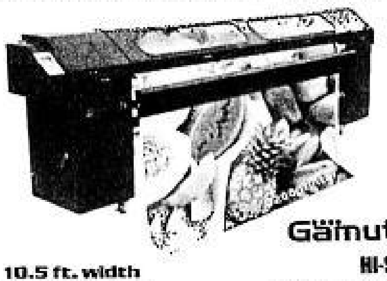

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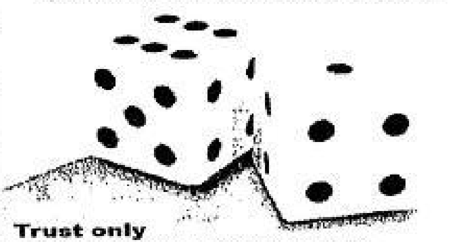

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... a wholly owned subsidiary of TOSHIBA Corporation, Toshiba Information Equipment (Philippines), Inc. (otherwise known as "TIP") is primarily engaged in the business of manufacturing, assembling, importing and exporting among others, office automation and information technology equipments. Its factory in Laguna Techno park currently produce more than half of the global production of Toshibas' Hard Disk Drive, and it ranked 4th in the SEC Top 5000 Corporation - 2006 version, it has consistently contributed to the growing export of the Philippines' electronic industry with annual revenue of more than US$1 Billion.

How the Budgeting process started

When TIP started its operation in 1996, it was using MS Excel® as a basic tool for Budgeting. The said tool enabled TIP's Budget Team to organize and consolidate information through the use of formulas. As TIP operation expands yearly, the level of information likewise grew, and the number of worksheets employed during Budget season have increased dramatically. Pre-formatted MS Excel® templates were deployed to the entire organization as the basic tool for inputting the Budget figures. But these multiple-worksheet system created serious maintenance issues, thus significant man hours were spent by its Finance & Accounting Dept. ("FIA") in consolidating the figures, catching the latest figures from the series of revisions and in crunching aggregates in terms of accounts, cost centers, business units and budget periods.

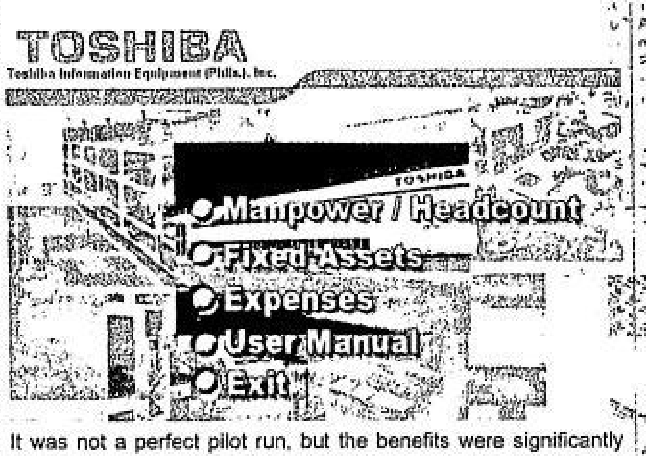
PowerOLAP introduction was the key to Budget process automation

Similar to other manufacturing companies, TIP's product cost consists of Direct Materials, Direct Labor and Factory Overhead (FOH). Though budgeting of Direct Materials has been under the confines of its mother factory in Japan, TIP has been challenged with the difficulties in generating other operational budgets for Manpower (Headcount for both Direct and Indirect Labor), Fixed Assets and the corresponding Depreciation and Expenses, both Factory Overhead (FOH) and General & Administrative (G&A) Expenses. High collaboration among its various departments is paramount in controlling the budget figures as key budgetary assumptions changed dramatically during the budget season.

But as business expands rapidly and competition gets tougher for TIP, the demand for highly realistic and on-time preparation of Budget has intensified. Ideas to automate the Budgeting process were planned at that time to answer the challenges ahead. It was great timing in 2001, when PowerOLAP was introduced to TIP's FIA Department as a budgeting, forecasting and reporting tool. Having seen PowerOLAP's dynamic power and excellent features, the FIA Team captured the benefits, as they very well understood that PowerOLAP will ultimately improve the Team's productivity, and it was envisioned as the key to the fast and effective automation of its Budget processes.

TIP reaped the benefits of PowerOLAP

After years of evaluation, TIP decided to deploy PowerOLAP as its Budgeting system in mid 2004. It only took three (3) months for the PowerOLAP Team to design a Budget system that will fit TIP's current operational set-up. So, the first PowerOLAP Budget was rolled out in December 2004.



It was not a perfect pilot run, but the benefits were significantly high, cutting the time spent in handling unavoidable revisions brought by series of changes in budget assumptions. Budget assumptions in the cubes eliminated the usual number crunching and PowerOLAP formulas were applied across business dimensions ensuring *"single version of the truth"*.

Now on its third year, PowerOLAP user, **Ms. Cherry Ricanor** - *Senior Manager of TIP* quips.. *"PowerOLAP has shortened the budget preparation leadtime to 14 days with high level of accuracy. It allowed us to be more flexible everytime there is change in assumptions, yet deliver the revise figure on a very short leadtime. It also changed the mindset of the Budget organization wherein the fifteen (15) different Departments gained ownership not only on the budgeted figures but as well as in the process in making it."* The continuous improvement on various cost drivers' template such as Labor Cost, Fixed Assets, Training, Carfare, Security & Janitorial, Expendable Tools and Factory Supplies will provide the visibility on details of relevant information which is highly essential in our *"pursuit for Cost Reduction"*.

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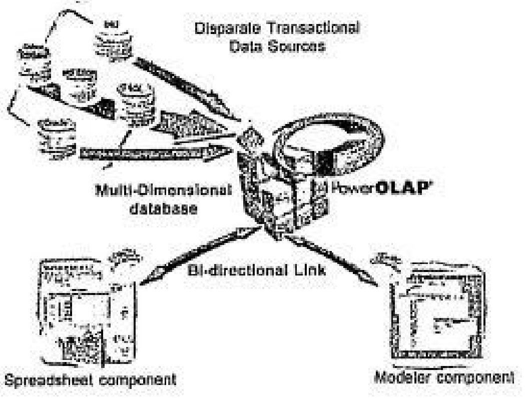

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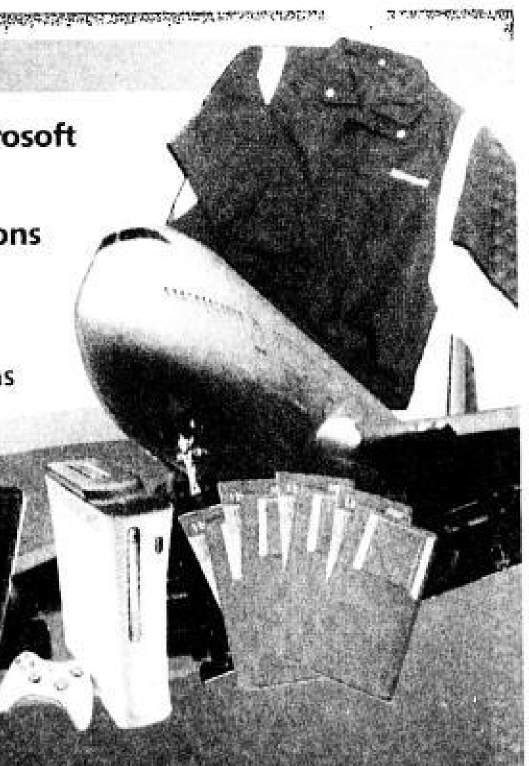

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Net foreign buying of stocks up 264%

NET FOREIGN BUYING IN THE stock market last January reached P11.8 billion, 264-percent higher than year-ago's P3.25 billion.

Philippine Stock Exchange president Francis Lim said the net buying level was one of the highlights noted by the PSE in January.

"We are off to a good start, and I am confident we can sustain our momentum, provided we maintain, if not improve on, the market's favorable investment environment," Lim stressed. "That means keeping in place the PSE's reform program to assure the integrity of the market and the efficient operation of the exchange."

"It will also require the government to attain a balanced budget, tame inflation and stabilize interest rates," he added. "And, of course, I hope we can conduct a peaceful and credible elections in May."

Based on PSE records, total foreign buying went up by 263 percent to P54.62 billion in January from P15.05 billion during the same month last year. Total foreign selling also increased by 263 percent to P42.8 billion from P11.8 billion for the same period last year. Net foreign buying is the difference between total foreign buying and total foreign selling.

With foreign buying up, stock market activity also enjoyed brisk business as total turnover went up to P86.35 billion, or 265.86-percent higher than the year-ago level of P23.6 billion. Average daily value turnover in January expanded 265.86 percent to P3.93 billion from P1.07 billion a year earlier.

Total market capitalization of all listed issues as of Jan. 31 increased by 24.18 percent to P7.44 trillion from P5.99 trillion in January 2006. The market capitalization of listed domestic companies hit P3.66 trillion, or 65.02-percent higher than the P2.22-trillion a year ago.

Stock prices, as tracked by the PSEi, went up by 8.61 percent or to 3,239.27 points during the first month of the year from 2,982.54 at the end of 2006.

At the end of January, the prices of 156 issues were up, those of 48 others were down, while that of 27 other issues were unchanged compared to their levels at the end of 2006.

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SPR_MKT421 OFFICE CONDO
F.A. 148sqm
VERNIDA I CONDO, Amorsolo St
Min Bid Price: P 5,661,000

SPR_MKT422 RSDL CONDO
F.A. 35.60sqm (near AMA College)
SOUTH STAR PLAZA,
South Super Hi-way
Min Bid Price: P 758,000

SPR_MKT431 2-STRY HSE & LOT
L.A. 240sqm F.A 352sqm
(Near Baticulin St)
Mayapis St. SAN ANTONIO VILL.
Min Bid Price: P 4,981,000

SPR_MKT428 RSDL CONDO w/PRKG
F.A. 107sqm
(Near Makati Sport Complex)
THE PEAK CONDO
Alfaro cor. Herrera Sts.
Min Bid Price: P 5,912,000

SPR_MKT429 OFFICE CONDO
BURGUNDY CONDO, Gil Puyat
(Near Crispa & Makati Medical)

Floor Area	Min Bid Price
45.30sqm	P 3,193,000
66.30sqm	P 4,679,000

SPR_MKT433 RSDL CONDO W/PRKG
F.A. 233sqm (Near Makati Sport Complex)
LPL MANOR, 116 Alfaro St. SALCEDO VILL.
Min Bid Price: P 12,280,000

SPR_MKT434 RSDL CONDO
PALACE OF MAKATI, P Burgos St.
(Near Makati Citadel)

Floor Area	Min Bid Price
32.60sqm	P 1,526,000
66sqm	P 3,087,000

SPR_MKT436 RSDL CONDO
F.A. 150sqm (Near Makati Sport Complex)
LPL MANOR, 116 Alfaro St SALCEDO VILL
Min Bid Price: P 7,905,000

SPR_MKT437 RDSL/INDUST HSE & LOT
L.A. 295sqm F.A. 260sqm
Suez St. Sta. Cruz(Near Ecoville Townhomes) near METROPOLITAN AVE.
Min Bid Price: P 7,717,000

SPR_MKT439 RSDL CONDO
F.A. 30 sqm.
T-TOWER CONDO (Near Bel Air)
P. Burgos cor. Calderon St.
Min Bid Price: P 969,000

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SPR_NE094 RSDL LOT w/ WRHSE
L.A. 240sqm. F.A. 160sqm
(Near Melencio Ext.)
KAPITAN PEPE SUBD. Cabanatuan
Min. Bid Price: P 612,000

SPR_NE096 2STRY HOUSE & LOT W/ INDSL WAREHOUSE
L.A. 1,000sqm. F.A. 443sqm.
(Beside SM)
MAHARLIKA HIGHWAY, Cabanatuan
Min. Bid Price: P 9,634,000

SPR_NE098 RSDL VACANT LOT
L.A. 150sqm
QUIMSON EXT ST. Sangitan, Cabanatuan (Near East Central Elem Sch)
Min. Bid Price: P 345,000

SPR_NE101 COMML LOT
L.A. 305sqm (near Antonio s Mall)
Brgy. Bernardo, CABANATUAN CITY
Min. Bid Price: P 2,074,000

SPR_NE103 2 RSDL VACANT LOTS
L.A. 400 sqm. (Near Youngs Clinic)
Bo. Valdefuente CABANATUAN CITY
Min. Bid Price P 1,292,000

SPR_NE122 RSDL LOT
L.A. 184sqm. (Within Old Muñoz)
Poblacion, Muñoz
Min. Bid Price: P 1,408,000

SPR_NE126 AGRI LOT
L.A. 82,029sqm. (Near Phil. Rice)
Bantug, Muñoz
Min. Bid Price: P 2,109,000

SPR_NE123 RSDL LOT
Bo. Maligaya, Muñoz
(Near Phil. Rice)

Lot Area	Min. Bid Price
12,964sqm	P 1,102,000
14,768sqm	P 1,256,000
30,527sqm	P 2,595,000

SPR_NE127 RSDL LOT
Provincial Road, Brgy. Manacnac
Palayan (Near ARC Manacnac)

Lot Area	Min. Bid Price
1,000sqm	P 340,000
1,066sqm	P 363,000

SPR_NE132 2STRY HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 500sqm. F.A.145.10sqm
CARDENAS ST. (Near Fire Station)
Poblacion, San Jose
Min. Bid Price: P 3,678,000

SPR_NE133 RSDL LOT
L.A. 941sqm (Near Health Center)
EUGENIO ST. Poblacion, San Jose
Min. Bid Price: P 3,774,000

SPR_NE134 2STRY HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 150sqm. F.A. 125sqm
PANAHON ST. (Within City Proper)
Calaocan, San Jose
Min. Bid Price: P 757,000

SPR_NE135 RSDL LOT
L.A. 177sqm
(Near Creek / San Jose)
BO. SAN AGUSTIN, San Jose
Min. Bid Price: P 301,000

SPR_NE147 RSDL LOT
L.A. 423sqm
(Near Sea Oil)
ANDAL ALINO SUBD. Talavera
Min. Bid Price: P 324,000

SPR_NE155 RSDL LOT
LA 4,319sqm (Near Provincial Rd)
Bo. of San Pascual, TALAVERA
Min. Bid Price: P 3,304,000

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- Intel® Centrino® DUO Mobile Technology Intel® Core™ DUO Processor T2050
- Genuine Windows Vista™ Home Premium
- 1GB 667MHz DDR2 Memory
- 80GB SATA Hard Disk Drive
- 14" Widescreen WXGA TFT Display
- 8x CD/DVD Burner (DVD+/-RW)
- Integrated Web Camera
- 3x USB 2.0, 4-in-1 Card Reader, Firewire, S-Video out
- 2.5kg

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EMPRIVA 540NVP2
- Intel® Centrino® DUO Mobile Technology Intel® Core™ 2 DUO Processor T5500
- Genuine Windows Vista™ Home Premium
- 1GB 667MHz DDR2 Memory
- 80GB SATA Hard Disk Drive
- 14" Widescreen WXGA TFT Display
- 8x CD/DVD Burner (DVD+/-RW)
- Integrated Web Camera
- 3x USB 2.0, 4-in-1 Card Reader, Firewire, S-Video out
- 2.5kg

Php55,999.00

EMPRIVA 630NVP2
- Intel® Centrino® DUO Mobile Technology Intel® Core™ 2 DUO Processor T5600
- Genuine Windows Vista™ Home Premium
- 1GB 667MHz DDR2 Memory
- 80GB SATA Hard Disk Drive
- 14.1" Widescreen WXGA TFT Display
- nVidia G73M 256MB
- 8x CD/DVD Burner Supermulti
- Integrated Web Camera, Fingerprint Security TPM
- 3x USB 2.0, 3-in-1 Flash Card Reader
- 2.5kg

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☐ 80GB SATA Hard Disk Drive
☐ 12" Widescreen WXGA TFT Display
☐ Intel® Graphics Media Accelerator 950
☐ 8x CD/DVD Burner (DVD+/-RW)
☐ Integrated Web Camera, Built-in Mic & Speaker
☐ 10/100/1000 Mbps LAN
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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of February 27, 2007)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	12.5	12.5	12	12	287,900
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	62	62	60.5	61	1,367,800
Bank of the Phil. Islands	68.5	68.5	67.5	68	1,972,000
China Banking Corp.	930	935	930	935	4,190
Citystate Savings Bank	19.75	19.75	19.75	19.75	300
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.62	0.63	0.61	0.61	35,780,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	111	111	109	109	80,700
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	66.5	67	66.5	67	4,288,500
Phil. Bank of Comm. A	55	56	55	55	4,200
Philippine National Bank	54	54	53	53	136,000
Phil. Savings Bank	63	65	63	65	2,700
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	42	42	41	41.5	301,700
Security Bank Corp.	85	85	83	83	1,524,800
Union Bank of the Phil.	66.5	66.5	65	65	30,100
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Citiseconline.Com Inc.	7.5	7.5	7	7	1,744,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	37.5	37.5	37.5	37.5	20,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1640	1650	1640	1650	500
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	2.2	2.22	2.16	2.16	225,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	825	830	805	810	210,310
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2130	2130	2130	2130	710
Ivantage Corp.	1.74	1.74	1.72	1.74	1,562,000
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
PNOC Energy Dev. Corp.	6.5	6.5	6.3	6.3	104,843,000
First Gen Corp.	57	57.5	55.5	56	523,500
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	78	79	78	79	952,100
Manila Electric Co. A	78.5	78.5	77.5	77.5	175,800
Manila Electric Co. B	78.5	79	78	78.5	1,039,500
Manila Water Co. Inc.	9.9	9.9	9.6	9.8	5,982,000
Petron Corp.	4.9	4.95	4.8	4.8	9,583,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.31	0.32	0.31	0.32	6,320,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.54	1.54	1.48	1.48	788,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.95	4	3.95	3.95	69,000
Cen Azucar De Tarlac	4.15	4.15	4.15	4.15	2,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	25	26	25	26	582,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	55	55.5	54.5	55.5	752,100
RFM Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	5,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.75	2.75	2.7	2.75	372,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.46	0.48	0.46	0.48	400,000
San Miguel Corp. A	66.5	66.5	65	65	199,900
San Miguel Corp. B	77.5	78	77	77	177,000
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	2.32	2.36	2.14	2.18	5,415,000
Universal Robina Corp.	19.25	19.25	18.25	18.75	1,669,600
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.9	1.9	1.82	1.86	34,577,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	5	5.1	4.95	5	9,628,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	33,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.6	8.7	8.6	8.6	4,841,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	6	6	6	6	32,000
Republic Cement Corp.	5.7	5.8	5.7	5.8	200,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies Inc.	5.4	5.4	5.2	5.3	2,775,000
Euro-Med Lab. Phil. Inc.	2.02	2.5	2.02	2.5	14,000
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.9	0.9	0.85	0.85	190,000
Metro Alliance Hldgs B	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	90,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71	100,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Picop Resources Inc.	0.42	0.43	0.4	0.42	33,870,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.013	0.014	0.013	0.013	239,100,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	42,600,000
Atok-Big Wedge.,Inc. B	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	1,000
Ayala Corp.	610	620	600	605	188,370
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.82	0.84	0.82	0.83	1,220,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	8.8	8.8	8.4	8.5	10,722,000
Ajo Net Holdings Inc.	0.0725	0.0725	0.07	0.07	25,000,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.35	3.35	3.2	3.2	1,504,000
APC Group Inc.	0.42	0.43	0.41	0.41	5,050,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.015	0.016	0.015	0.015	2,046,200,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.36	1.44	1.34	1.4	22,114,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.66	1.66	1.64	1.66	35,000
Pal Holdings Inc.	4.15	4.2	4	4.1	523,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	6	6.9	5.9	6.5	5,187,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	4.15	4.15	3.95	4	33,882,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	7.4	7.4	7.3	7.4	655,000
Fil-Estate Corp.	1	1	1	1	10,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	6	6	5.7	5.8	2,656,000
F&J Princ.E Holdings Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.2	58,000
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.34	0.36	0.34	0.36	2,700,000
House of Investments Inc.	3.4	3.4	3.35	3.35	869,000
J.G Summit Holdings Inc.	13.75	13.75	13.5	13.75	2,641,500
Medco Holdings	0.41	0.43	0.41	0.41	3,390,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	100,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	11	12.5	10.75	11	6,027,900
Multitech Inv. Corp.	2.2	2.3	2.18	2.2	5,422,000
Pacifica	0.021	0.021	0.02	0.021	36,800,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.38	0.39	0.32	0.33	23,150,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1	1	1	1	90,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.83	0.84	0.8	0.8	1,360,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.23	0.26	0.23	0.25	114,250,000
SM Investments Corp.	377.5	377.5	370	375	177,250
South China Resources Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	670,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	1.9	1.9	1.82	1.84	598,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.235	0.24	0.21	0.21	540,000
Zeus Holdings Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.4	0.4	190,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	17	17	16.5	16.5	7,793,900
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.52	0.52	0.48	0.48	450,000
Belle Corp.	1.64	1.64	1.52	1.56	28,251,000
A Brown Company Inc.	1.42	1.44	1.38	1.38	3,705,000
Cityland Development Corp.	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	140,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.48	0.49	0.48	0.49	2,100,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.8	3.9	3.75	3.9	40,000
C & P Homes Inc.	3	3	2.8	2.85	1,402,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.35	0.35	0.33	0.34	3,370,000
Eib Realty Developers Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.26	0.26	520,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.99	0.99	0.92	0.93	51,490,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.86	1.86	1.86	1.86	150,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.0825	0.09	0.0825	0.0875	54,900,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.86	1.86	1.8	1.82	65,453,000
Gotesco Land Inc.B	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	110,000
Interport Res.	0.016	0.016	0.013	0.013	383,100,000
Interport Res. B	0.016	0.016	0.013	0.013	252,900,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.58	0.58	0.55	0.56	5,320,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	1.04	1.04	0.97	0.98	8,419,000
Megaworld Corp.	3.4	3.45	3.3	3.3	65,223,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	4.8	4.95	4.8	4.8	173,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.65	0.65	0.59	0.64	30,200,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	1,000,000
Polar Property Holdings	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	10,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	20.5	21	20.5	20.75	3,111,400
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.69	0.69	0.66	0.66	23,920,000
SM Development Corp.	4.35	4.35	4.25	4.3	1,388,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	12.75	12.75	12.25	12.5	4,212,000
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.94	0.96	0.82	0.82	15,720,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc	0.17	0.18	0.15	0.155	15,220,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	24.5	25	24.5	24.5	110,300
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	30,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.98	1.98	1.92	1.94	20,914,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1370	1375	1360	1375	107,480
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	7.7	7.7	7.4	7.4	3,099,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2605	2605	2535	2550	138,760
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.3	0.3	5,310,000
Diversified Fin. Network	3	3.25	3	3.25	49,000
Imperial Res.	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.021	3,800,000
Ionics Inc.	2.6	2.65	2.55	2.55	2,070,000
IPVG Corp.	7.1	7.1	6.2	6.4	3,968,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	11,500,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.0625	0.0625	0.06	0.06	20,500,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.42	1.58	1.42	1.58	1,771,000
Transpacific Broadband	2.65	2.7	2.46	2.48	820,000
Philweb Corp.	0.055	0.055	0.047	0.05	389,500,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	4.75	4.75	4.55	4.55	676,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	29	31	29	30.5	4,379,900
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	500,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.26	1.28	1.26	1.28	5,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	3.3	3.3	3	3.1	2,033,000
Manila Jockey Club	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	647,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.42	0.45	0.4	0.4	2,750,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	1.18	1.18	1.04	1.06	3,392,000
EDUCATION					
iPeople Inc.	3.7	3.7	3.55	3.6	240,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Easycall Phils. Inc.-Com	5.4	5.4	5.3	5.3	20,000
Macroasia Corp.	2.9	3.15	2.8	3.15	10,495,000
Paxys Inc.	30	30	29.5	30	1,137,300
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	6.7	6.9	6.5	6.6	1,293,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	6.8	7	6.7	6.7	591,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.014	0.015	0.013	0.014	1,794,400,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	9.8	9.9	9.4	9.4	3,149,000
Benguet Corp. A	14	14.25	13	13.25	167,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2.95	3	2.7	2.8	458,000
Geograce Res. Phil. Inc.	1.94	2.02	1.84	1.88	243,466,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.34	0.35	0.33	0.33	162,140,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.42	0.42	0.38	0.38	76,450,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.034	0.034	0.032	0.032	1,405,500,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.037	0.038	0.034	0.034	517,600,000
Omico Corp.	0.022	0.024	0.021	0.023	10,697,200,000
Philex Mining Corp.	4.75	4.8	4.6	4.7	20,115,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	19	19	18.5	18.5	426,400
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.79	0.82	0.77	0.77	8,200,000
Vulcan Ind'l	1.32	1.36	1.28	1.3	24,085,000
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.38	0.38	0.35	0.36	11,840,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.015	0.015	0.014	0.015	769,600,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.015	0.016	0.015	0.016	149,700,000
The Philodrill Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	537,400,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	10.25	10.25	10	10	247,100

CURRENCIES

February 27, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.758265	1.000000	48.1730
Japan	Yen	0.006288	0.008293	0.3995
United Kingdom	Pound	1.489005	1.963700	94.5973
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.097060	0.128003	6.1663
Switzerland	Franc	0.616626	0.813206	39.1746
Canada	Dollar	0.653508	0.861846	41.5177
Singapore	Dollar	0.496507	0.654793	31.5433
Australia	Dollar	0.601320	0.793021	38.2022
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.011420	2.652661	127.7866
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.202182	0.266638	12.8448
Brunei	Dollar	0.494886	0.652656	31.4404
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000083	0.000110	0.0053
Thailand	Baht	0.022501	0.029674	1.4295
UAE	Dirham	0.206499	0.272331	13.1190
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.318800	63.5306
Korea	Won	0.000808	0.001066	0.0514
China	Yuan**	0.097796	0.128974	6.2131
Argentina	Peso	0.244405	0.322321	15.5272
Brazil	Real	0.364236	0.480354	23.1401
Denmark	Kroner	0.134149	0.176916	8.5226
India	Rupee	0.017218	0.022707	1.0939
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.217237	0.286492	13.8012
Mexico	New Peso	0.068460	0.090285	4.3493
New Zealand	Dollar	0.538349	0.709975	34.2016
South Africa	Rand	0.107394	0.141631	6.8228
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023000	0.030332	1.4612

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY Time- Feb. 26, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian Time Closing Rate as of Feb. 26, 2007

NTC sticker plan seen jacking up cell phone prices

Added costs to vendors will only be passed on to users

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE NATIONAL TELECOMMUNication Commission's plan to require registration stickers on all handsets for sale could jack up the prices of mobile phones.

This was the concern aired by attendees at a public hearing held by the NTC.

Under the scheme, phone sellers need to register each unit with the NTC and pay P75 per sticker that will serve as a proof of registration. The sticker is to be placed on the side of the phone.

The commission said this would regulate cellular phone sales to protect buyers of handsets that came from legitimate sources.

NTC also said the registration plan was aimed at discouraging suppliers from under-declaring the number of units they import.

Renato M. Lee, legal counsel for Samsung Cellular and First Asian Mobile, said the sticker would translate to additional costs to vendors and providers, and could be just a form of taxation.

"The cell phone industry is already over regulated. There are already several memorandum circulars providing various rules. There are also stickers for the IMEI and bluetooth. We suspect that it (sticker plan) is no longer for the purpose of regulation but for taxation," he said.

The IMEI or international mobile equipment identifier is a unique 15-digit number that serves as the serial number of a GSM handset. The number can be found in a sticker placed inside the phone casing.

Globe Telecom Inc. vice president for regulatory affairs Froilan Castelo agreed with Lee, pointing out that the sticker would cost almost as much as a P85 SIM pack that already included free load.

"If this proves to be a means of taxation we believe the NTC has no authority to impose it."

Other attendees at the hearing noted that the sticker plan would not address smuggling or cellular phone theft. They said it would just widen the gray market rather than the legitimate market because of a sticker-induced price increase for legitimate handsets.

"The draft circular does not actually contain any provision that would deal with the issue of handset robbery," Menchie Briones of Sun Cellular said.

She added that sellers of second-hand units could just bypass the NTC to avoid the P75 fee which they would have to pass on to the buyer.

"This will further increase the gray market, in fact it could even create a black market of illegal stickers," she said.

Representatives from Nokia, Sony Ericsson and Motorola expressed similar opinions.

NTC Deputy Commissioner Jorge Sarmiento said the regulator would use public feedback to improve the guidelines on this cellular phone regulation. He added that the price of the sticker was not fixed and that it could be reduced so as not to become a big burden to sellers and, in turn, buyers.

Sarmiento gave the attendees 10 working days to submit their position on the draft circular.

US-based telco to open contact center in Cebu

By Riza T. Olchondra

CORDIA CORP., A TELECOMmunications service provider in Florida, United States, said it would open a contact center in Cebu City.

"We hope (it) will be operational by May 1," Cordia president and COO Kevin Griffo told the INQUIRER in an e-mail.

"We estimated that we could save about 50 percent on our cost of getting new customers through this new call center."

The company said its 130-seat call center would provide outbound sales for the United States and other international markets.

Also, the center may provide customer relations, support and collection services.

Griffo said the center would employ 140 people and the majority of which would come from Cebu.

"We have been reviewing this plan for some time and chose Cebu for its staffing capability, accent-neutral spoken English, and lower operational cost," Cordia chair and CEO Joel Dupre said in a statement.

Cordia, through its operating subsidiaries, offers clients local and long-distance telecommunications services in more than 60 countries.

Terms of 2 SEC execs ending on March 11

UNLESS REAPPOINTED BY President Macapagal-Arroyo, the terms of office of Commissioners Ma. Juanita Cueto and Thaddeus Venturanza of the Securities and Exchange Commission will expire on March 11 this year.

Cueto was appointed in 2001 to complete the unexpired term of Commissioner Rosalinda Casiguran who resigned to join another government office.

Venturanza was named to the post in September last year to replace Commissioner Joselia Poblador who quit in December 2005 for health reasons.

Under the Securities Regulation Code, SEC commissioners serve for a fixed term of seven years.

The other current SEC commissioners are Chair Fe Barin, Jesus Martinez and Raul Palabrica.

Any appointment to fill up the positions that will be vacated has to be done in accordance with the Omnibus Election Code which has strict rules on the appointment, promotion, demotion or transfer of government officials during the campaign period of the May polls.

APL

APL Launches Mindanao Express Service in Philippines

New twice-weekly express service expands Mindanao region's capacity to export fresh produce to major global markets

Singapore, 16 February 2007 – APL, a global leader in container transportation and logistics, today announced the launch of a new twice-weekly service to cater for the growing global demand for Philippines produce.

The Mindanao Express (MDX) will provide a 700-TEU weekly capacity increase for cargo moving from the region of Mindanao and other key Philippines locations before connecting with APL's global service network.

Three dedicated vessels of between 700 and ~50 TEU capacity will make twice-weekly calls to the ports of Bugo and Davao, also calling at Cagayan and General Santos, before connecting via Singapore and Taiwan to destinations in Asia, Europe and North America.

Demand for goods from the Mindanao region such as fruit, tuna and rubber is strong, with fruit production in particular a key driver of export growth. The US Government's recent decision to include selected products from the Philippines in the US Generalised System of Preference – including bananas – has boosted Mindanao exports. Mindanao currently accounts for more than 95% of the country's banana export requirements. The total value of Philippines banana exports are expected to reach US$4.5 billion in the six years between 2004 and 2009.

Launching the service, Jim McAdam APL's President Asia-Middle East, said: "The MDX represents the second phase of our Mindanao expansion. It substantially improves our ability to serve this fast-growing growing economy, and to maintain our leadership position throughout the Philippines."

The first phase of APL's Mindanao expansion began last year with the opening of new landside infrastructure, including a state-of-the-art Reefer Centre in Davao, which has a total of 102 reefer points.

APL's Vice President, Global Reefer, David Chan, said: "Our recent investment in reefer containers and landside infrastructure is complemented by the MDX, which is an important part of our strategy to be the leader in cold chain transportation in the Philippines. This is an increasingly important market driven by the 'food basket' of Mindanao, with strong demand coming from new markets such as Japan and the Middle East."

In addition to bananas, Mindanao is expecting rapid growth in the export of mangoes and coconuts.

Maurice Mckeating, Managing Director of APL Philippines said: "Mindanao is an important market for APL - particularly for the export of fresh produce such as bananas. Speed to market is all-important when transporting these kinds of perishables. The MDX will significantly improve capacity and frequency for cargo from the Philippines to global markets via Singapore and Kaohsiung. This is central to our strategy of providing our customers with fast, efficient access to potentially lucrative new markets."

APL has a long history in the Philippines, having begun serving the archipelago in 1917. Today it has nine offices and more than 100 staff.

About APL

APL is a global container transportation company offering more than 60 weekly services and nearly 300 calls at more than 90 ports in Asia, Europe, the Middle East and the Americas. It combines world-class intermodal operations with leading-edge IT and e-commerce. APL is a unit of Singapore-based Neptune Orient Lines (NOL), a global cargo transportation and logistics company. APL Web site: www.apl.com

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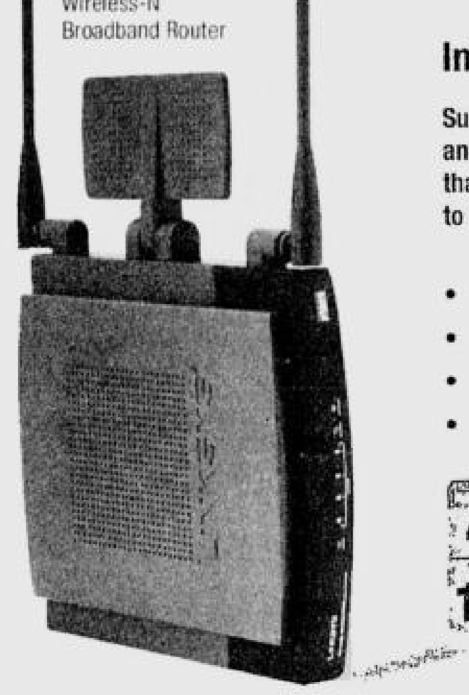

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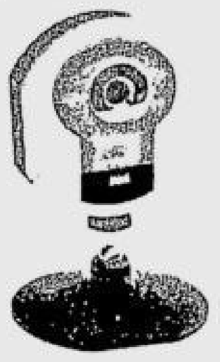

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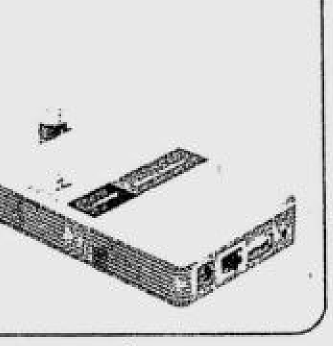

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NISSAN

Davao del Sur's cocoa industry on verge of death, DA says

DIGOS CITY— THE COCOA INdustry of Davao del Sur, which made farmers better off during the 1960s and 1970s, is now on the verge of death.

Dropping prices since the 1990s have forced farmers to turn their backs on cacao and shift to growing bananas instead, officials said.

From a high of P60 a kilo, cacao beans are now trading at only between P25 and P30 kilos.

This has forced some farmers to uproot their cacao trees and venture into other fruit trees.

Cacao beans are mainly processed into cocoa power, which is heavily used in baking and processing food.

Epifania Solomon, officer in charge of the provincial agriculture office, said that from more than 5,000 hectares planted to cacao in the 1960s, only 1,259 hectares in the towns of Sta. Maria, Malita, Sta. Cruz and Bansalan remain dedicated to cacao.

The shift to other high value crops was started by the Cocoa Investors Incorporated (CII) in Hagonoy town and Hacienda San Miguel in Malita in 1986, Solomon said.

Both companies, owned by businessman Eduardo Cojuangco, now grow durian and mango.

Taking their cue from the decision of the two companies, small- and medium-scale cacao growers have also changed crops.

Some of them simply offered their cacao fields to banana companies, such as the Lapanday Development Corporation (Ladeco), which has been expanding in Davao del Sur.

Solomon said the agriculture office, however, has been encouraging cacao farmers to continue tending their crops.

She said the Department of Agriculture wanted to restore the province's image as one of the cocoa capitals of the Philippines.

Solomon added that the revival of the cocoa industry would also mean more income for farmers.

She said with proper technology, a farmer could increase his yield so he could make more money.

Currently, farmers only produce a maximum of 800 kilos of dried cacao beans per hectare per year using traditional methods.

Solomon said aside from extending technical assistance, the agriculture office would also help the farmers finance their cacao production.

"It is our desire to control the dwindling number of farmers growing cacao. Quality beans and semi-processed cocoa still have vast domestic and international market potential," Solomon said.

She said this prospect also drove Davao del Norte officials to revive their cocoa industry.

Alberto Brosas, who has a three-hectare cacao farm in Sta. Maria town, said he never thought of shifting to other crops despite the lows in production.

"I have been into cacao farming for 20 years and it is still profitable despite the unstable price," he said.

Brosas said that in farming, one only needs perseverance, the right technology and opportunity to become successful.

"Venturing into other crops does not guarantee success," he said. *Eldie S. Aguirre, Inquirer Mindanao*

RYAN LIM

PROPHET OF BOOM

AGRICULTURE Secretary Arthur Yap briefs the INQUIRER on the rosy prospects of the agriculture sector, which accounts for a fifth of the Philippines' gross domestic product.

Movie production facility to rise on Cebu property

By Irene R. Sino Cruz
Inquirer Visayas

Bigfoot signs 25-year lease

CEBU CITY—AFTER A LONG WAIT, the Cebu City government has finally signed up the first locator at the South Road Properties (SRP), the 300-hectare reclaimed area that the city owns.

Bigfoot Entertainment (BFE) signed last week a 25-year lease agreement for a 2-hectare area at SRP, where the company plans to build a multimillion-dollar movie production facility.

The company plans to set up several sound stages, including a movie studio, on the property to attract Hollywood film companies planning to shoot on locations outside the United States.

A sound stage is a large soundproof studio usually used for filming motion pictures.

A Bigfoot executive earlier explained that a bigger sound stage could accommodate huge movie sets. The company said the investment in the expansion facility at the SRP could reach $10 million.

Cebu City Mayor Tomas Osmeña said BFE planned to acquire another 16 hectares for an integrated development.

"I'm more excited about what Bigfoot intends to do at SRP because Bigfoot is taking a very aggressive posture," Osmeña said in an interview.

He said the company planned to transform the 16 hectares of prime waterfront area into an integrated development, including a mega yacht club.

Osmeña said Bigfoot's planned development would also include a retirement facility, residential condominium, hotels, offices and a bus terminal.

He said the project would be implemented within three to four years.

The BFE also expressed willingness to work with real estate developers such as Filinvest Land Inc., Osmeña said.

A Brunei investor is also eyeing a hotel project as part of Bigfoot's complex, he added.

Once the purchase agreement is finalized, Osmeña said, the city would ask Bigfoot to pay 40 percent of the total purchase price with the balance payable over four years.

Since Bigfoot could not wait for the bidding process to be completed, the mayor said the company decided to lease the two hectares first because it wanted to immediately start on its film production facility.

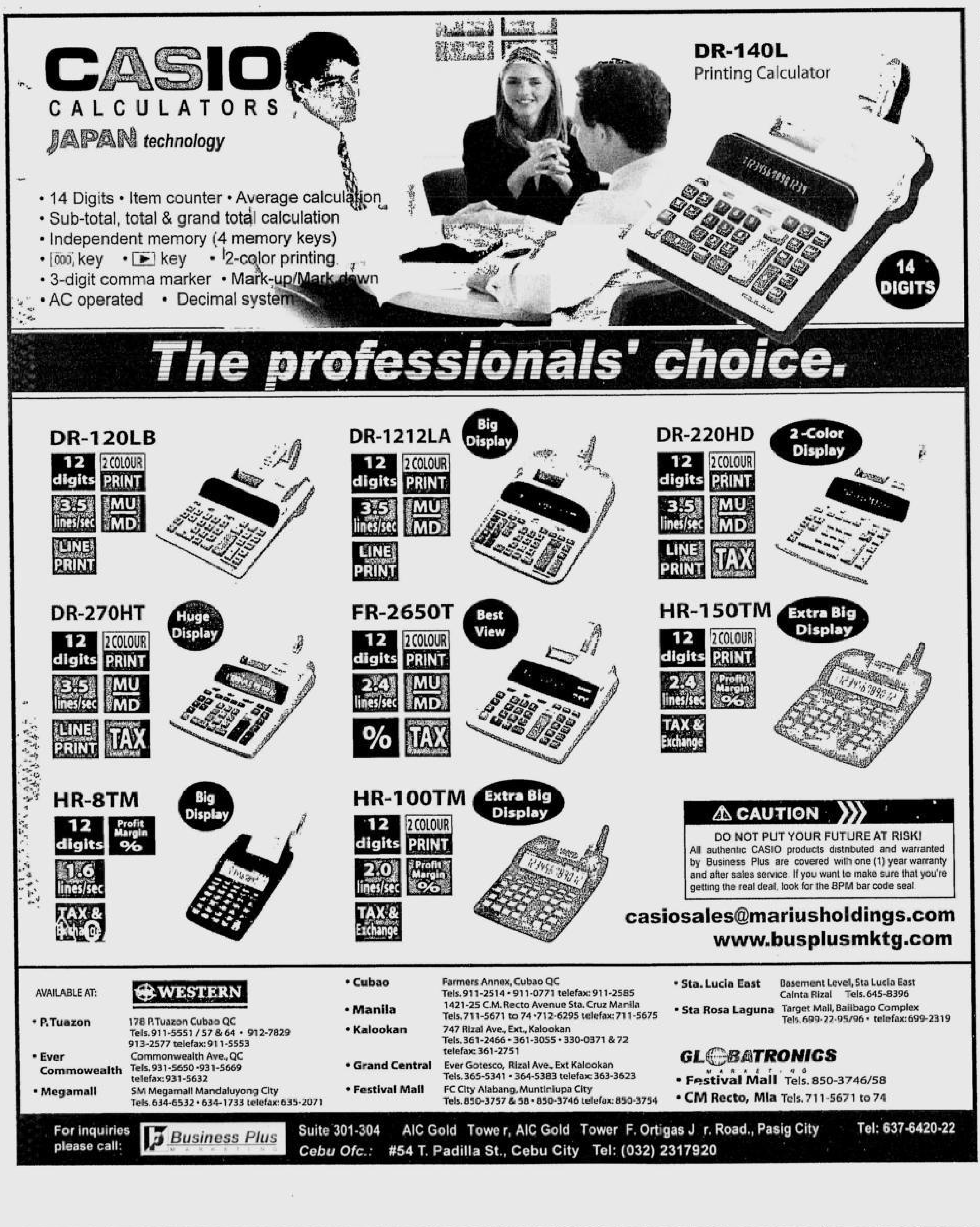
Bigfoot has two sound stages in its Mactan facility, which cost over $2.1 million (about P99.4 million).

These sound stages are limited to filming music videos and advertisements.

Osmeña cheered the signing of the lease with Bigfoot because it took a while to get the project off the ground.

Ffforts to market the SRP to investors hit a snag when the Talisay City claimed it owned part of the reclaimed area.

The issue was settled when President Macapagal-Arroyo issued Proclamation No. 843, transferring the ownership of the SRP to the Cebu City government and declaring the area as alienable and disposable.



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Northern Mindanao eyes foreign tourists

By Ryan D. Rosauro
Inquirer Mindanao

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—NORTHERN MINdanao tourism officials are preparing to embark on an aggressive campaign to make the region an "international choice destination" of tourists.

In 2006, at least 55,220 foreign tourists arrived in the region, which is composed of the provinces of Bukidnon, Camiguin, the two Misamis provinces and Lanao del Norte.

Tourists from the United States and Japan accounted for the bulk of foreign arrivals, but Korea is fast catching up, according to records from the regional tourism office.

Other sources of tourists in 2006 were Canada, Australia, China, Germany, United Kingdom and The Netherlands.

Counting Filipino and balikbayan tourists, 893,071 tourists visited Northern Mindanao in 2006, up 26.17 from the 2005 tally of 707,807.

Among the provinces, Misamis Occidental, with the cities of Ozamiz, Oroquieta and Tangub cornered the most visitors at 288,684, or about a third of total tourist arrivals in the region.

Misamis Oriental, with the cities of Cagayan de Oro and Gingoog, followed with 262,272 visitors; Camiguin at 220,062; Lanao del Norte and Iligan City have a combined visitor arrivals of 84,426; and Bukidnon, with Malaybalay and Valencia cities at 37,627.

The rise of Misamis Occidental as a destination is notable given that tourists usually confined themselves to Cagayan de Oro and Camiguin.

Officials attributed the spike in arrivals to the commemoration of the 250th year of Christianity in Misamis and the Misamis Occidental Aquamarine Park (MOAP).

Set up by the provincial government five years ago, MOAP started as a marine conservation area and was further developed into an eco-tourism site.

A year ago, it won a Gawad Galing-Pook award for marine conservation.

With more tourists, the rate of hotel occupancy in the region rose from 61.4 percent in 2005 to 68.11 percent in 2006, or an increase of 6.71 percent.

The stepped up campaign to attract more foreign tourists will be undertaken in addition to the region's efforts "to continually mark itself on the country's tourism map," Catalino Chan III, director of the Department of Tourism in Region X, said.

Chan said the increasing appeal of northern Mindanao as a tourism destination could be credited to peace in the region.

WB backs Transco auction

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE WORLD BANK HAS OFFERED LONG-term financing to the group that will take over the operation of National Transmission Corp. to help the government attract investors.

This developed after the World Bank agreed to the government's plan to transfer the debts and assets of National Power Corp. to the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) and TransCo.

"Should the government desire, the World Bank would be prepared to consider assistance to facilitate successful implementation of the TransCo concession," World Bank country director for the Philippines Joachim von Amsberg said yesterday in a statement.

He said assistance may include such options as World Bank and Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) risk-mitigation instruments and long-term financing to the winning bidder from the International Finance Corporation, the private sector arm of the World Bank Group.

The recent bidding for TransCo, the centerpiece of the government's privatization program, failed after only one of the three prequalified bidders submitted a bid.

Aside from billions of debt hounding TransCo, the lack of a proper congressional franchise for the concession was widely cited by potential investors as a major hindrance to the auction.

Von Amsberg said the World Bank was supportive of the Philippine government's efforts to push forward the reforms stipulated in the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (EPIRA), the privatization of the generation and transmission assets, and the restructuring of the power sector for the benefit of the Filipino consumers.

"We hope that this consent will send a positive signal to both domestic and foreign investors interested in acquiring the assets of NPC," Von Amsberg said.

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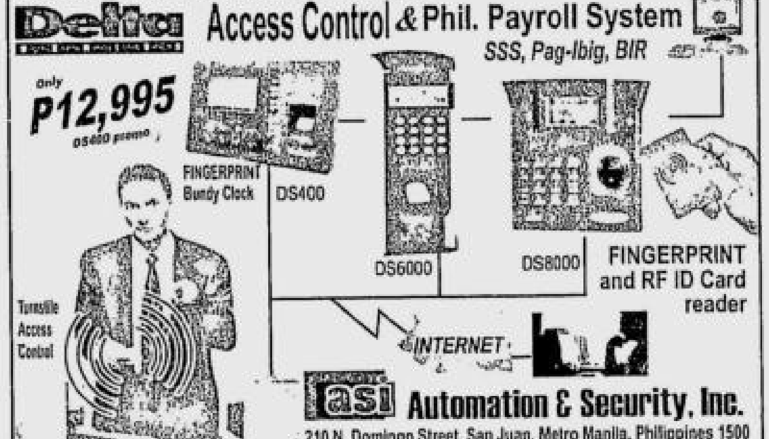

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SPR_ SJ535 RSDL CONDO
F.A. 72.65sqm
(near Greenhills Shopping Ctr.)
PLATINUM 2000,Annapolis
Min Bid Price: P 2,779,000

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SPR_MKT426 RSDL CONDO w/PRKG
F.A. 107sqm
THE PEAK CONDO
Alfaro cor. Herrera Sts.
(near Makati Sports Complex)
Min Bid Price: P 5,912,000

SPR_MKT433 RSDL CONDO w/PRKG
F.A. 233sqm
LPL MANOR, 116 Alfaro St.
SALCEDO VILL.
Min Bid Price: P 12,280,000

SPR_MKT439 RSDL CONDO
F.A. 30 sqm
T-TOWER CONDO (Near Bel Air)
P. Burgos cor. Calderon St.
Min Bid Price: P 969,000

SPR_MKT436 RSDL CONDO
F.A. 150sqm w/ PRKG
LPL MANOR, 116 Alfaro St..
SALCEDO VILL.
Min Bid Price: P 7,905,000

SPR_MKT434 RSDL CONDO
PALACE OF MAKATI, P Burgos St.
(Near Makati Citadel)
Floor Area Min Bid Price
32.60sqm P 1,526,000
66sqm P 3,087,000

QUEZON CITY
SPR_OCL484 RSDL CONDO
F.A. 38.80sqm
XAVIERVILLE ROYALE CONDO.
Loyola Hghts. (Near Ateneo & Katipunan Ave)
Min Bid Price: P 1,320,000

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F.A. 80sqm
UNION SQUARE ONE CONDO
15th Ave. (Near SM & ALI Mall)
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SPR_LSP420 4-STRY COMML BLDG
L.A. 136sqm F.A. 399.71sqm
Real St. (Alabang Zapote Rd)
PAMPLONA
Min Bid Price: P5,014,000

MANILA
SPR_MNL457 3-STRY RSDL BLDG
L.A. 86sqm F.A. 259sqm
(Near Solis St)
DAGUPAN St. Ext. Tondo
Min Bid Price: P 1,372,000

PASAY
SPR_PSY477 2RSDL BLDG
L.A. 674sqm F.A. 245sqm & 400sqm (Near MRT Station)
P. ZAMORA St.
Min Bid Price: P 8,413,000

QUEZON CITY
SPR_QCL482 UNFINISHED BLDG
L.A. 1,643sqm
(infront Broadway Centrum)
AURORA BLVD. cor. Madison St.
Min Bid Price: P 48,880,000

SPR_ QCL501 6STRY BLDG
L.A. 300sqm F.A 1,177.25sqm
SGT. CATOLOS STREET
Cubao (Near Magsaysay HighSchool)
Min Bid Price: P 20,162,000

SPR_QCB503 6-STRY RSDL CONDO W/ PARKING ALLEY
L.A. 2,205sqm FA. 4,480sqm
HOSLA CONDOMINIUM I
Tomas Morato (Near E. Rodriguez)
Min Bid Price P 82,514,000

NUEVA ECIJA
SPR_NE138 4STRY COMML BLDG
L.A. 178sqm. F.A. 580sqm
ELSA TOWER (Within City Proper)
Poblacion, San Jose
Min. Bid Price: P 6,477,000

PAMPANGA
SPR_PAM170 1-STRY COMML BLDG
LA 4,280sqm. F.A. 2,449 sqm.
Bo. Dalaquitan
SAN MATIAS, Sto. Tomas
Min. Bid Price: P 13,515,000

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Jasmin St., (Near Grandmas Hotel)
BLOSSOMVILLE SUBD., Matatalab
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SPR_TAR174 HOUSE & LOT
LA 267sqm FA 95sqm
Jasmin St. San Roque
CAPITOL GARDENS SUBD.
Min. Bid Price: P 534,000

SPR_TAR176 RSDL LOT
L.A. 4,798 sqm.
Bo. SAPANG MARAGUL
Min Bid Price: 407,000

SPR_TAR 180 RSDL LOT
Bo. SAN ISIDRO
Lot Area Min. Bid Price
642sqm P 171,000
2,979sqm P 576,000

SPR_TAR184 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 300sqm. F.A.186sqm
SUNRISE SUBD.
Maliwalo (Near Radio Mana)
Min. Bid Price: P 1,015,000

SPR_TAR188 RSDL LOT
L.A. 3,400sqm.
Sitio BANGA-BANGA
Min. Bid Price: P 578,000

SPR_TAR193 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 867sqm. F.A. 112sqm.
Sitio Malgaya, SAPANG MARAGUL
Min. Bid Price: P 426,000

SPR_TAR194 RSDL LOT
L.A. 400sqm.
Brgy. STA. CRUZ
(formerly Bo. Alvindia)
Min. Bid Price: P 68,000

SPR_TAR217 RSDL LOT
L.A. 373sqm
(Beside Banco San Juan)
M. H. Del Pilar St., Bo. STO. CRISTO
Min. Bid Price: P 4,756,000

SPR_TAR185 RSDL LOT
JOEMAC SUBD. San Vicente
(Near Camp Macabulos)
Lot Area Min. Bid Price
990sqm P 842,000
1,143sqm P 972,000
1,028sqm P 1,049,000

SPR_TAR196 RSDL LOT
FELOMENA SUBD, San Rafael
Lot Area Min. Bid Price
150sqm P 77,000
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SPR_TAR201 RSDL LOT
SAN JUAN DE MATA and Sto. Niño
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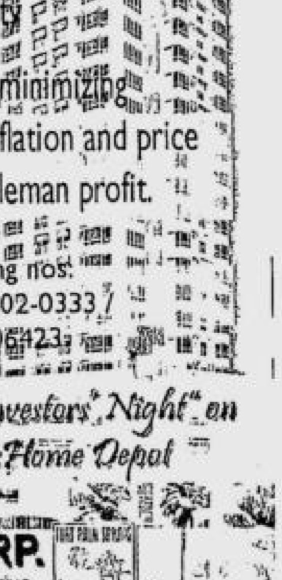

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DepED
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DIVISION OF SAMAR
Catbalogan, Samar

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The **Department of Education, Division of Samar** in Region VIII, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites qualified and eligible suppliers & manufacturers/distributors/contractors of school furniture to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the hereunder contract:

Name of Contract	:	Package A: Supply and Door-to-Door Delivery of **2124** sets of **All Wood Elementary Tables and Chairs** with **58** sets of **All Wood Teachers Tables & Chairs** Package B: Supply and Door-to-Door Delivery of **2,375** sets of **All Wood Secondary Armchairs** with **48** sets of **All Wood Teachers Tables & Chairs**
Location	:	Identified **Elementary & Secondary Schools in Samar**
Brief Description	:	Package A & B are school furniture using all wood materials to be delivered door-to-door to recipient elementary & secondary school indicated in the ***Schedule of Requirements***
Approved Budget For the Contract (ABC)	:	**Package A: P 4,514,800.00** **Package B: P 2,073,000.00**
Contract Duration/ Delivery Period	:	**180 CD**

Prospective bidders should have experienced in undertaking a single largest contract of similar project within the last three (3) years with an amount at least 50% of the ABC, and have key personnel and equipment (owned or leased or under purchase) available for the implementation of the project. The list of minimum personnel and equipment requirement is indicated in the Eligibility Forms. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. The BAC will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statements and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The schedule of activities is as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	February 26 - March 02, 2007
2. Pre-Bid Conference	March 02, 2007
3. Submission/Opening of Bids	March 15, 2007
4. Bid Evaluation	March 16 - 19, 2007
5. Post Qualification	March 20 - 22, 2007
6. Notice of Award	March 26, 2007

Bid Documents will be available to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **Php 4,500.00** for Package A and **Php 2,000.00** for Package B to the DepED - **Samar Division Office Cashier.**

The Division Office assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

Approved by:
(Sgd.) **WIGBERTO C. BELIZAR, JR.**
BAC Chairman

(PDI--Feb. 28, 2007)

PNOC-ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Energy Complex, Merritt Road
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City
Tel. No. 893-1320, Local 5279

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND REBID

The PNOC-Energy Development Corporation is inviting all interested suppliers to apply and submit sealed bids for the supply and delivery of the following:

Chemical Metering and Centrifugal Pumps under FGJ 60856
Approved Budget: PHP 11,380,000.00

Eligibility forms and bidding documents shall be available for issuance at the above address c/o **Eloisa J. Hufana** starting **February 27, 2007,** and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of PHP 400.00 per document.

For purposes of clarifying certain matters, a pre-bidding conference shall be held on **February 28, 2007, 2:00 p.m.** at the above address.

Applications for eligibility and sealed bids shall be submitted to, and registered with the PNOC-EDC Supply, Property and Materials Management Division at the above address, and thereafter dropped in the padlocked bid box thereat not later than **2:00 p.m. (Supply Management's Office Wall Clock Time)** of **March 16, 2007**. Public opening of bids shall follow immediately thereafter. **Late bids shall not be accepted.**

Prospective bidders shall signify conformance to the bidding terms and conditions, as required, and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution. Source of funding is from Internal Cash Generation of PNOC-EDC. All bids should be within the Approved Budget for the Contract in order to qualify.

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation reserves the right to annul the bidding process, to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid which is most advantageous to PNOC-EDC without thereby incurring liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the ground(s) for PNOC-EDC's action.

Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee I

(PDI–Feb. 28, 2007)

PNOC-ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Energy Complex, Merritt Road
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City
Tel. No. 893-1320, Local 5282

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND BID

The PNOC-Energy Development Corporation is inviting all interested suppliers to apply and submit sealed bids for the supply and delivery of the following:

Quick Connect Pipes and Fittings under FGX 62202
Approved Budget: PHP 2,156,440.00

Eligibility forms and bidding documents shall be available for issuance at the above address c/o **Ms. Maria Cristina Lynn M. Mercado** starting **February 27, 2007,** and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of PHP 400.00 per document.

For purposes of clarifying certain matters, a pre-bidding conference shall be held on **March 7, 2007, 2:00 p.m.** at the above address.

Applications for eligibility and sealed bids shall be submitted to, and registered with the PNOC-EDC Supply Management Department at the above address, and thereafter dropped in the padlocked bid box thereat not later than **2:00 p.m. (Supply Management Department Wall Clock Time)** of **March 21, 2007**. Public opening of bids shall follow immediately thereafter. **Late bids shall not be accepted.**

Prospective bidders shall signify conformance to the bidding terms and conditions, as required, and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution. Source of funding is from Internal Cash Generation of PNOC-EDC. All bids should be within the Approved Budget for the Contract in order to qualify.

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation reserves the right to annul the bidding process, to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid which is most advantageous to PNOC-EDC without thereby incurring liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the ground(s) for PNOC-EDC's action.

Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee II

(PDI–Feb. 28, 2007)

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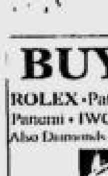

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(PDI–Feb 28, 2007)

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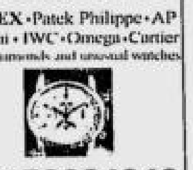

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City of Olongapo
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BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
General Services Office, 2/F City Hall Complex
Tel./Fax No. 047-222-2699
Web: www.olongapocity.gov.ph
Email: Olongapo@plol.net

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The City Government of Olongapo through the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) invites suppliers/ manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for the eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project	Lease of Heavy Equipment (5 months) For Garbage Collection & Disposal
Location	Olongapo City
Contract No.	OC-041-ESMO-01-07 GD
Brief Description	Lease of (4) units dumptruck & (1) unit bulldozer
Approved Budget	Php 12,499,854.47

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to the Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Evaluation of Bids, Post Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

COMPLETE SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

DATE	ACTIVITIES	VENUE
Feb. 20, 2007 to Mar. 06, 2007	Posted at PhilGEPS Website & Conspicuous Places	
Mar. 06, 2007 to Mar. 12, 2007	Issuance of Bid Documents 8:00 am to 5:00 pm	BAC Secretariat 2/F Gen. Services Office, Olongapo City Hall
Mar. 13, 2007	Pre-bidding conference at 11:00 am	3rd Floor Engineering Dept., Olongapo City
Mar. 26, 2007	Opening of Bids at 11:00 am	3rd Floor Engineering Dept. Olongapo

Bid Documents will be available to prospective bidders upon payment of non-refundable bid form fee of ***P22,500.00*** to the Treasury Dept. Olongapo City.

The BAC reserves the right to accept and reject any bid and to cancel all bids at any time prior to award of contract, waive any defects therein and accept the offer most advantageous to the City Government without thereby incurring any liability whatsoever to offset expenses or losses the bidder may incur in the preparation of the bids and obligation to inform the bidder(s) of the ground(s) for the basis of BAC's action.

(Sgd.) **MERLITO J. MAJARUCON**
Head, BAC Secretariat

NOTED BY:
(Sgd.) Atty. **ANGELITO R. OROZCO**
BAC Chairman

(PDI--Feb. 23 & 28, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
PROVINCE OF RIZAL
Municipality of Morong
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Municipality of Morong Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), is inviting qualified bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following projects:

	Project Cost
Improvement of San Jose-San Guillermo Road, Morong, Rizal	P 10,000,000.00
Construction/Improvement of Doña Ana-Yapak Road, Brgy. Lagundi, Morong, Rizal	3,000,000.00

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

Issuance of Eligibility and Bidding Documents	Pre-Bid Conference	Submission and Opening of Eligibility and Bid Envelopes
February 28, 2007 10:00 AM 1st Flr., Morong Municipal Building Office of the MPDC	March 7, 2007 10:00 AM 1st Flr., Morong Municipal Building Office of the MPDC	March 13, 2007 10:00 AM 1st Flr., Morong Municipal Building Office of the MPDC

That as of bidding date, March 16, 2007, 10:00 AM, prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last 2 years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use for non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualifications of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

Eligibility and documents shall be issued to applicants upon filing of a Letter of Intent to apply and payment of a non-refundable bidding fee of P500.00 in the form of Cash or Manager's check in favor of Municipality of Morong.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR). Only applicants who paid bid fees shall be allowed to attend the Pre-Bid Conference and submit Bid proposals.

The Municipality of Morong thru the Bids and Awards Committee reserves the right to reject any and all bids and/or part thereof, or waived any defect contained therein and may accept the offer which it deems the lowest calculated responsive bid.

(Sgd.) Engr. **CLAVERO T. PANTALEON**
BAC Chairman

(PDI–Feb. 28 & March 7, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT
Pilar Street, Zamboanga City

SECTION I. INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Zamboanga City Water District, through its Bids and Awards Committee I (BAC I), invites Suppliers/Manufacturers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

LOT No.	PR No.	Brief Description	Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	Cost of Bid Documents	Date of Issuance of Bid Documents	Date of Pre-Bid Conference	Date of Submission/ Opening of Bids
1	9423	Brass Corporation Cock & Union Coupling for Stock Replenishment	P 901,000.00	P 900.00	February 23 to March 2, 2007	March 6, 2007	March 20, 2007
2	9472	Air Release Valve Assembly, Brass Straight Coupling & Union Coupling for Vitali Water System	502,600.00	500.00	February 23 to March 2	March 6, 2007	March 20, 2007
3	9282	Cast Iron Flexible Coupling, Tee, & Gate Valves for Stock Replenisment	203,000.00	265.00	February 23 to March 2	March 8, 2007	March 22, 2007
4	9470	Cast Iron Wye, Sleeve Type Flexible Coupling, Gate Valve, Adaptor, PVC Telescopic Valve Extension w/ Steel Cover for Vitali Water System	386,500.00	400.00	February 23 to March 2	March 8, 2007	March 22, 2007

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules & Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted to organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, as specified in Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process of the Eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with lowest calculated bid (LCB) shall be advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine its reponsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT and inspect the Bidding documents at the address given below during office hours (8:00–5:00 p m)

All Bids must be accompanied by a ***Bid Security in the form of Cash, Certified Check, Cashier's and Manager's Check in the amount of One Percent (1%) of the Approved Budget Cost.*** Late Bids shall not be accepted.

Bid Opening shall be at the 2nd Floor, ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT Main Office Building, Pilar St., Zamboanga City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidder's representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

The ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time or prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT
Mr. Noel M. Kawaguchi
Pilar St., Zamboanga City 7000
Telephone No. (062) 991 1556
Email:
Fax: (062) 991-2799

(Sgd.) **ARNULFO A. ALFONSO**
BAC I Chairman

(PDI – February 28, 2007)

NOTICE

TO ALL STOCKHOLDERS AND CREDITORS OF PALAWAN WOOD ENTERPRISES, INC.:

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT PALAWAN WOOD ENTERPRISES, INC., was dissolved by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) on 11 August 2003 per certification issued on 21 March 2005. Said corporation will wind up its business or corporate affairs on 14 March 2007 at its office located at Unit G, 11th Floor, Strata 100, Emerald Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City.

Any claims against its corporate asset/s listed hereunder shall be filed at its corporate office at Unit G, 11th Floor, Strata 100, Emerald Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City on or before 23 March 2007, ten (10) days after the last publication of this notice.

If there is no claim filed after the lapse of said period that would constitute waiver on the part of the claimant or creditor against the asset/s of the corporation.

(Sgd.) **ELENA T. PEREZ**
Acting Corporate Secretary

Asset:
1. real property covered by TCT - 6383

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(PDI--Feb. 14, 21 & 28, 2007)

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Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
Maynila, Pilipinas
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/distributors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project / Brief Description	:	Supply, delivery, installation and commissioning of one (1) unit Digital Forensic Imaging System for Currency Notes, Coins and Security Documents
Approved Budget for the Contract	:	P3,920,000.00
Delivery Period	:	Within ninety (90) calendar days upon receipt of approved contract

Prospective bidders should have undertaken a similar project awarded and completed within the last five (5) years (Y2002 to present) amounting to at least 50% of the approved budget for the contract. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	**28 February – 13 March 2007 (up to 2:00 PM only)**
2. Pre-bid Conference	**16 March 2007, 9:30 AM**
3. Opening of Bids	**03 April 2007, 2:00 PM**
4. Bid Evaluation	} These shall be in accordance with the prescribed } periods allowed in the Implementing Rules & } Regulations (IRR)-A of R.A. No. 9184 dated } 10 January 2003
5. Post-qualification	
6. Notice of Award	

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P2,000.00 to the BSP Cashier.

The BSP assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

The BSP reserves the right to reject any and all bid proposals, or declare the bidding a failure, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) **JUAN DE ZUÑIGA, JR.**
Chairman

(PDI–Feb. 28, 2007)

AUCTION

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To bid go to www.henrybutcher.com and go to the Medical Supplies auction dated 13 March 2007

Viewing: Thursday, 8 March 2007 - 9:00am - 5:00pm or Earlier by Appointment

For more details contact Dadas Serna at Tel: +63 2 8522910/11
Email: dadas.serna@henrybutcher.com

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NOTICE

TO ALL STOCKHOLDERS AND CREDITORS OF APOLLO MINERAL RESOURCES, INC. (formerly APOLLO OIL EXPLORATION & MINERAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION):

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT APOLLO MINERAL RESOURCES, INC., (formerly **APOLLO OIL EXPLORATION & MINERAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION),** was dissolved by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) on 11 August 2003 per certification issued on 21 March 2005. Said corporation will wind up its business or corporate affairs on 14 March 2007 at its office located at Unit G, 11th Floor, Strata 100, Emerald Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City.

Any claims against its corporate assets shall be filed at its corporate office at Unit G, 11th Floor, Strata 100, Emerald Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City on or before 23 March 2007, ten (10) days after the last publication of this notice.

If there is no claim filed after the lapse of said period that would constitute waiver on the part of the claimant or creditor against the asset/s of the corporation.

(Sgd.) **ELENA T. PEREZ**
Acting Corporate Secretary

(PDI--Feb. 14, 21 & 28, 2007)

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INVITATION TO BID

Dart Philippines Inc. is inviting all interested bidders to come and view "Various Manufacturing equipments, machine parts, shelves, electrical lightings and parts, tools, assorted nuts and bolts etc."

Location: 116 Progress Avenue Carmelray Industrial Park, Canlubang, Laguna
Telephone Number: 888-0800
Contact Person: Jun Catalan

Viewing starts on March 1, 2007 from 9:00am to 5:00pm
Deadline for submission of bid
MARCH 9, 2007 - 12:00 noon

(PDI - February 28, 2007)

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deeply mourns the demise of one of its officers

RESTITUTO CANLAS INTAL

"Resty"

of Pampanga and San Andres, Manila

May 17, 1929 – February 23, 2007

His remains lie in state at the National Shrine of the Sacred Heart,
Dao St., San Antonio Village, Makati City.

Holy Mass will be celebrated on March 3, 2007, Saturday, 10 a.m.
at the National Shrine of the Sacred Heart.
Cremation will follow at the Loyola Memorial Chapel,
Guadalupe, Edsa, Makati City at 12 noon.

We request prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring...
INQUIRER OBITUARIES

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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Death Notices

FELIX BONUS BASILIO

Peacefully died in the Grace of our Lord on February 26, 2007 at the age 75. His remains lie in state at their residence in Rosepark Subd., Concepcion, Tarlac. Interment will be on March 3, 2007 at 8:30am.

—oOo—

ARTURO P. ORBIGOSO

peacefully joined the Lord on February 24, 2007. His remains lie at Purok II, #086 Brgy. Piel, Baliwag, Bulacan. Interment today, February 28, 2007 at Gateway to Heaven, Baliwag, Bulacan.

—oOo—

ERNESTO JIMENEZ, JR.

Aug. 10, 1946 - Feb. 24, 2007

His remains lie in state at Chapel C, Christ the King Parish, Greenmeadows, Q.C. Cremation and burial at the Loyola Memorial Park Marikina will follow the Memorial Mass at 8:00 a.m., Thursday, March 1, 2007.

> **"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord."**
> — 2 Corinthians 5:8

DR. REYNALDO PERALTA SEGUI

Retired PRESIDENT, Pangasinan State University
National Gintong Ama Awardee, 1991

Peacefully joined his Creator on February 26, 2007 at the age of 71.

His wife **Dr. Luz Dawang-Segui**; children **Dr. Reynaldo, Jr.** and **Susan**; **Engr. Wilfredo** and **Dr. Rosemarie**, **Dr. Rodrigo** and **Dr. Carla**, **Dr. Mariluz**, **Engr. Edgardo** and **Dr. Ophemia**, **Atty. Marijoy** and **Danilo**, and grandchildren; his mother **Julita**, brothers and sisters, **Aurora**, **Eddie**, **Manolito** and **Nelly** and relatives request everyone to join them in prayers for his eternal rest in the kingdom of our Lord.

His remains lie in state at Imperial Chapel, La Funeraria Paz, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City and will be transferred to Sta. Maria, Pangasinan residence today, February 28, 2007.

Interment will be at St. Ignatius Memorial Gardens, Sta. Maria, Pangasinan on Saturday, March 3, 2007, after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at the Our Lady of the Pillar Parish Church.

People, Events & Products

Pfizer asks: How much is your medicine really worth?

THERE IS A CONTINUING STRUGGLE to understand the real value of health maintenance today, perhaps because of the impact brought about by rising costs. Many are deterred by the retail price of drugs, not realizing that they should also consider the extent of savings they could be getting. The result is that more people resort to buying cheap medicines under the impression that they are getting their money's worth.

This distorted notion about what is sulit becomes a hindrance to making the right decision in healthcare. But what does it really take to consider cost of medication as sulit? It might help to determine what is actually on the line when medication is deemed necessary.

A drug is created to save or prolong an individual's life. It is supposed to help a patient endure illness, prevent further suffering, and improve quality of life. Indirectly, it also helps alleviate possible burden of loved ones who worry and watch over their sick loved one if hospitalization is necessitated. Hospitalization usually happens when medication is unsuccessful or not met, thereby complicating health conditions. With well-researched drugs, such positive outcomes are ensured based upon years and years of study on thousands upon thousands of patients. No stone is left unturned during the entire process, keeping in mind the ultimate goal of preserving life through medication. In a way, the outcome becomes more important than the output.

In Pfizer's case, it usually takes up to 15 years to complete the research process on a single drug. For that entire duration, billions of precious dollars have already been invested to ensure the success of such endeavor. The result would be a new and effective drug that could help improve the lives of millions around the world. The result is a huge dossier of proofs consisting of well-conducted clinical trials which is submitted to the authorities for approval. Doctors base their judgment on the prescriptions based on the amount and quality of evidence found in these clinical trials for each new drug.

New diseases will always come out and new drugs will always be needed. More patients are relying on these well-researched drugs to help them move on with their life. Even generic companies are depending on research-based companies' outcomes to provide an alternative.

In the meantime, one would do well to carefully consider the real value of life when looking at the actual cost of medication. The price one pays is usually higher when health conditions worsen.

Suzuki redefines underbone sports with Raider R150

SUZUKI PHILIPPINES INC RECENTLY INtroduced the Suzuki Raider R150-a mean-looking, tough performing ride that features a racer-replica technology combined with a big bike interface.

Packed with a new GSX-R inspired Aerodynamic Full Engine Cowling Design and a convenient Electric Start, the Suzuki Raider R150 resembles its big bike counterparts.

Descended from Suzuki's flagship motorcycle model- the Suzuki Raider150-a renowned class leader in the sporty underbone category and the back-to-back Endurance King for 2005 and 2006 NRA Endurance Races, the Suzuki Raider R150 features the same signature sharp and sporty body works, compact instrument panels, big bike speedometer design and 10-spoke cast-aluminum wheels. Likewise, the Suzuki Raider R150 boasts of a superior DOHC (Double Overhead Camshafts), a 4 Valve 6 Speed, 150cc engine that produces 16.0hp of raw power and a 6-speed transmission.

The Suzuki Raider R150 comes in blue, black and red. Each unit of the Raider R150 retails at P88,900.

Int'l speaker at Christian leaders seminar

DUE TO INSISTENT PUBLIC DEMAND, DR. Myles Munroe, best selling author of "Rediscovering the Kingdom", "Understanding Your Potential", and other books is back in the country to speak at the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International (FGBMFI) Philippines' one-day seminar for Christian leaders and workers at the Philippine International Convention Center, Roxas Boulevard, Manila on Feb. 28 at 2 to 7 p.m.

MUNROE

An international motivational speaker, lecturer, educator and business consultant, Munroe is the founder and president of Bahamas Faith Ministries International, an all-encompassing network of ministries headquartered in Nassau, Bahamas.

Traveling extensively throughout the world, Munroe addresses critical issues affecting individuals' social and spiritual development. The central theme of his message is the transformation of followers into leaders and maximizing one's individual potential. He believes a true leader is a model for his followers and leads in the same way as Jesus Christ did, breaking barriers to help man discover his destiny, purpose, and potential.

Munroe will also address the Philippine National Prayer Breakfast at the Centennial Hall, Manila Hotel, 8 a.m. on March 1, and the 26th National Convention of the FGBMFI (Philippines) in Cebu City from March 1 to 3 on the theme "Vision Beyond Limits".

He was main speaker at last year's FGBMFI Philippine National Convention held at the Dusit Hotel Nikko. During that visit, he and his wife Ruth made a courtesy call on President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and gave her a copy of his two books "Power of Vision" and "Spirit of Leadership".

For ticket inquiries, call the FGBMFI national office at 047-2247203 or 0917-4001003 (Sally dela Cruz), the PNPBF national office at 931-5177 or 0905-8405664 (Manny Afable), Word for the World Christian Fellowship at 819-0606 (Pastor Raymund Ladao), or Bert Lotilla at 0917-8920702.

PHILTOA BOARD PAYS A VISIT TO TOURISM SECRETARY
Tourism Secretary Joseph 'Ace' Durano is shown with the incoming Philippine Tour Operators Association (Philtoa) board for 2007. Seated with Durano are 1st VP Yvonne Pascual, Avian Travel; president Jo J. Pestano, Bay Area Travel; and 2nd VP Regina Ples, Airborne Travel. Standing, from left, are adviser Jobert Cocjin, Seawind Resort; ethics committee chair Dodie Hermogeno, Broadway Travel; product development chair Katy dela Pena; trustee Grace Mocas, Philippine Tourism Authority and secretary general Cathy de Mendoza, Cosmopolitan Travel; auditor Zita Enriques, Fiesta Travel; treasurer Linda Tan Kwok, Island Travel; PRO Rey Concepcion, Days Hotel; Roy Martin, Microtel; program committee chair Cherry Pie Pena, Club Intramuros and Undersecretary for promotion Eduardo Jarque of the DOT.

PROCEEDS TO PONDONG PINOY
His Excellency Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales (left) receives from Felicidad Sy the proceeds of the charity dinner held recently at the launching of the Tagaytay Highlands Steakhouse at the SM Mall of Asia. The proceeds will be for the benefit of the Pondong Pinoy project to help the less fortunate in the Archdiocese of Manila. SM has been a staunch supporter of Pondong Pinoy through the proceeds of coins gathered at the Mall of Asia fountain and other projects like charity dinners.

China Bank to Bohol for confab

CHINA BANKING CORP (CHINA BANK), THE country's first privately owned commercial bank, is holding its 2007 National Convention at Bohol Beach Club in Panglao Island, Bohol from March 1 to 3.

The theme is "Beyond limits in 2007"—a simple yet powerful statement that "celebrates the bank's past achievements and moves us to push even further this year," according to senior vice president Samuel L. Chiong, deputy head for branch banking. "Look around you, it's evident that the bank is doing things differently, we're now taking bigger and bolder steps. We came up with this theme because all the changes happening around China Bank affirm that our capacity for change and improvement is boundless," he said. The 2007 convention is planned around the concept of a convention-cum-vacation to give the participants a fresh new perspective on conventions. "Everyday our branch managers have to run their respective branches, work hard to meet their quotas, and get new clients. This event will try not to remind them of work, but will leave them feeling appreciated, reenergized, and inspired to get back to work when it's over," said assistant vice president and national marketing head Emmanuel Tandoc.

Almost 200 branch managers and key bank executives will convene for this annual event. The highlight of the convention is the awarding of the top branches in the various categories-Branch of the Year; Highest Volume in Treasury, Consumer Banking, Trust products and services, among others.

'Fore' future entrepreneurs

THE JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT OF THE PHILIPpines Inc (Japi) will be holding the 18th Junior Achievement Golf Classic on March 2 at the Canlubang Golf and Country Club in Laguna.

Top companies such as PLDT, Petron Corp, Security Bank Corp, PriceWaterhouse Coopers, SGV & Co, Unilab, just to name a few, lend their support by sponsoring this annual tournament and other events to raise funds for Japi's noteworthy projects.

For 38 years, the Junior Achievement Program has given more than 50,000 Filipino students a chance to run their own mini-companies under the tutelage of some of the more brilliant minds from the business community. Sustaining such an effort depends highly on events such as these as well as the other donations from the generous sponsors. Proceeds from this tournament will be used entirely to support Japi's continuing efforts to develop deserving Filipino youth into the business entrepreneurs of tomorrow.

For more details, call Betty K. Cabradilla, Japi officer-in-charge, at 848-1044 and 848-1045.

Cilostazol: More than just PAD treatment

TRAITOR" DISEASES ARE CHARACterized as illnesses affecting a lot of people without them being aware that they have it. One example of this is Peripheral Arterial Disease or PAD. PAD manifests itself through persistent pain felt in thigh and calf muscles, which significantly decreases one's walking ability. Consequently, PAD has also been shown to have major effects on cardiovascular health.

Without proper treatment, PAD not only increases the risk of amputation of lower extremities, it also raises one's risk of a heart attack and stroke. A patient with PAD has about five times the risk of dying from a heart attack or stroke over the next 10 years compared to someone who does not have the disease. PAD is also known to be prevalent among people with diabetes.

Known as the drug of choice to treat the symptoms of PAD, Otsuka Pharmaceutical's brand of cilostazol (Pletaal) has been shown to reduce pain associated with feeling of numbness and fatigue in the legs, thereby allowing patients to increase walking distance. Those who have taken cilostazol experienced an improvement in maximal walking distance by 44 to 50 percent. Moreover, cilostazol has also been shown to decrease the risk of heart attack and stroke brought about by this illness.

The Journal of Stroke and Cerebrovascular Diseases, which is the official publication of the National Stroke Association, published a report regarding a double-blind investigation conducted with the help of the Japanese Stroke Society. The study examined the effectiveness of cilostazol and was conducted for over four years in Japan.

Results showed that long-term administration of cilostazol significantly prevented the recurrence of stroke with a relative risk reduction of 41.7 percent.

Cilostazol is also the first and only antiplatelet drug proven to be effective in lacunar infarction, which is caused by the occlusion of small blood vessels within the brain. Lacunar infarction is one of the subtypes of stroke.

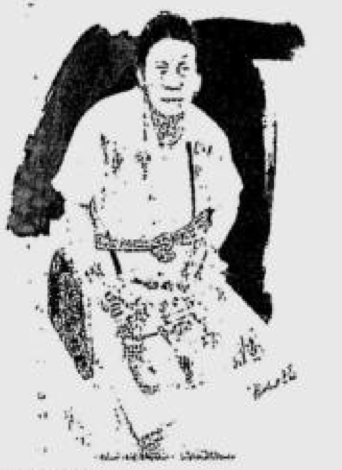
With the antiplatelet therapy being perceived as common therapy for stroke, Cilostazol (Pletaal) monotherapy is sufficient in blocking the clumping of platelets as it significantly decreases the recurrence of lacunar infarction.

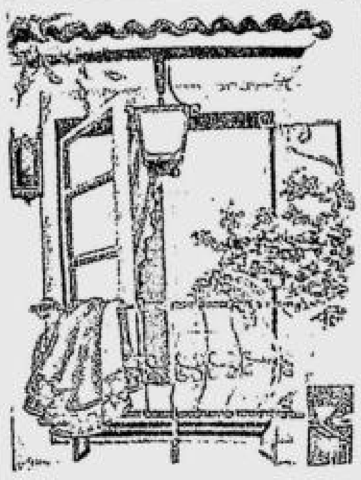
The company's commitment to increase the public's knowledge regarding PAD paved the way for a special campaign called Improve Peripheral Arterial Disease Awareness Club (i-PAD). It is a project which could help patients learn more about PAD, and could also help doctors regarding the proper diagnosis of the disease.

One of the first undertakings of i-PAD is the Bantay Paa project which seeks to determine the prevalence of PAD among those with diabetes through ABI (ankle brachial index) screening and monofilament testing. The said screening compares blood pressures between the patient's arms and ankles. It can also gauge the severity of a particular PAD case which can help in finding the right approach to be taken for treatment.

For more inquiries about PAD and the i-PAD Awareness Club, call the i-PAD Connect Hotline at 811-i-PAD for Metro Manila (811-4-723) or 1-800-811-i-PAD for provincial areas (1-800-811-4-273).

WHIRLPOOL EXTENDS HELPING HAND TO 'REMING' VICTIMS
Tropical storm 'Reming' devastated most provinces in the north and left more than 700 people dead, 700 people missing, more than 2,000 people injured, and an estimated P5 billion worth of damage to agriculture and infrastructure. The storm separated family members, crushed dreams of a better life, and snatched hopes of a better tomorrow. But all of these are being addressed by fellow Filipinos who are more than willing to offer their time and resources to give hope to the dampened spirits of typhoon victims. Whirlpool Philippines recently donated appliances to a family in the Bicol region through the program 'At Your Service: Starpower' hosted by Iza Calzado on QTV 11. Salome Villa, mother of four, is trying to start a new life after the storm took away almost everything the family had. Whirlpool gave them a refrigerator and a Fujidenzo washing machine to help them get back on their feet after being ravaged by the storm. The donation is but one of the material benefits Whirlpool distributed after 'Reming' left major provinces heavily damaged. Whirlpool believes in the age-old trait of Filipino hospitality. This is what most of us refer to as 'Bayanihan'-the spirit of unity and cooperation. Shown are (from left) Chris Sioco, Whirlpool AVP for sales and marketing; Joy Catiis, Whirlpool marketing manager; Iza Calzado and Pamela Garcia, Whirlpool marketing officer.


BENCAB
"Vendor at Ruins of St. Paul's"


PHYLLIS ZABALLERO
"Coloane 1"

BENCAB LEADS ARTISTS IN VISUAL CELEBRATION OF MACAU

Four top Filipino artists unveil their distinctive perspectives of Macau in an art exhibit titled "Macau Magic", opening under the auspices of the Macau Government Tourist Office-Philippines (MGTO-Phils.) from Feb. 28 to March 7, The Podium, Ortigas Center, Pasig.

National Artist BenCab, Soler Santos, Claude Tayag and Phyllis Zaballero celebrate the multi-faceted city of Macau and its islands, after a trip they undertook last year on invitation of MGTO-Phils. to render their impressions of what was formerly a sleepy backwater of Asia and now one of the most dynamic tourist destinations in the world. Accompanied by curator Vita Sarenas of Finale Art File, and with the support of The Podium, theirs was a creative journey, with assignments to interpret different aspects of the place.

Known for their unique styles and mediums, the four artists have come up with wildly exhilarating versions and visions of the city and its environs, trafficking today at the intersection of tradition and modernity. BenCab, known for his well-calibrated rendition of human emotions, draws Macau's ordinary folk. Santos, on the other hand, telescopes the nitty-gritty of the place, the often-missed details of the ordinary. Rhapsodizing on tourist sights and gustatory delights in multiple frames, Tayag touches base with how Macau represents itself to the world; while Zaballero trains her eyes on Macau's age-old houses, their details and interiors betraying the dwellers' character and spirituality.

Curator for Macau Magic is Finale Art File, which, for over two decades has promoted the best in painting, sculpture, and print, and has supported cutting edge installation art photography and new media from established masters. Also lending support is The Podium, the preferred meeting place of professionals from the surrounding workplace and residents of the nearby upmarket homes. Opened in August 2002 as a joint venture of the Keppel Group of Singapore and the SM Group, the mall's sleek flooring, chrome columns and large skylight lend the perfect backdrop for its over 177 specialty shops, restaurants and two state-of-the-art cinemas.

For more information, please call or visit MGTO-Phils. at Suite 11-D Valero Tower, 122 Valero Street, Salcedo Village, Makati City, tels. 812-2595/813-0947.

ADVT.

ROL ME slated on March 9

THE REACHING OUT FOR THE Lord (ROL) series of the Tuklasan Sector-Marriage Encounter Foundation of the Philippines is slated to sponsor another Marriage Encounter (ME) weekend seminar from March 9 to 11 at the St. Bridget's Convent, Mag-asawang Ilat, Tagaytay City.

Spearheaded by Raymond-Nao Checa, together with ROL 24 classmates, the weekend seminar is ideal for married couples seeking fulfillment and rejuvenation in their marriages. The 3-day live-in seminar also hopes to redirect their relationship to be Christ-centered.

Scheduled to serve as ecclesial team is: Rev. Fr. Jess V. Fernandez SJ, Rudy-Menie Ledesma and Domeng-Lui Alagde.

For registrations/reservations (on a first-come, first-served basis), call: Gerry-Gina Martinez - 0918-9119680, 0918-9119672 or 871-5141; Danny-Evelyn Fernandez- 0915-549-6035, 731-4868, 740-8816; and Fil-Cecil Red-740-8627, 0919-4488038.

Deadline for registrations/reservations is on March 5. Seminar fee is P2,600/couple for the entire 3-day weekend.

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Science and Technology
ADVANCED SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY INSTITUTE
ASTI Bldg., Technology Park Complex, C.P. Garcia Ave.,
U.P. Campus, Diliman 1101 Quezon City, Philippines
Tel. Nos. (632) 426-97-64, 426-36-94 Fax: (632) 426-97-56

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Advanced Science and Technology Institute (ASTI), Department of Science and Technology invites bona fide suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following item:

TACIS TOWER SERVER 25 UNITS
TACIS LAPTOP COMPUTERS 32 UNITS
RACK MOUNT SERVER 3 UNITS
TOWER SERVER 3 UNTS
TOWER SERVER 4 UNITS

The Bid documents shall be available at the ASTI Property Section from February 28,2007 until March 14, 2007 upon payment of non-refundable bidding fee.

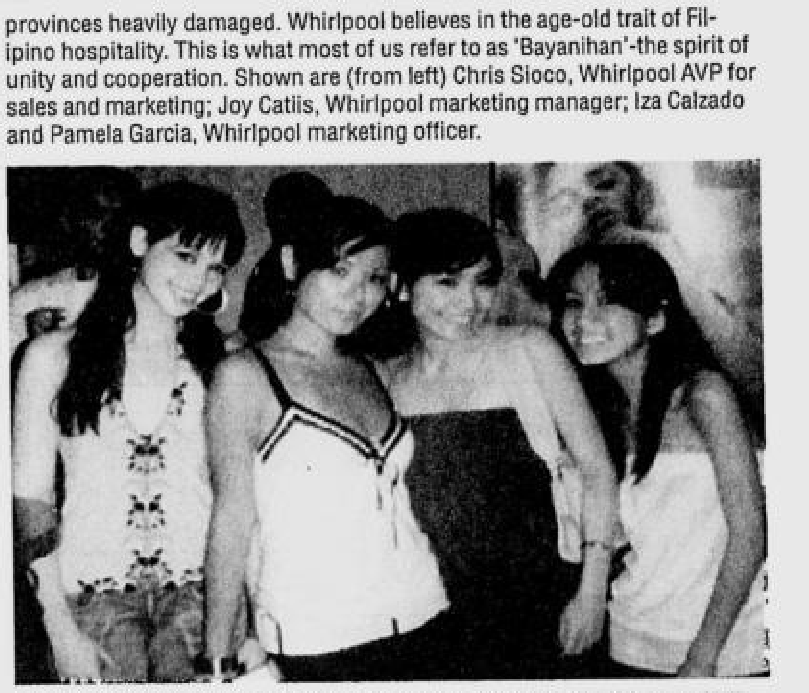
Pre-bidding Conference will be on March 01, 2007 at 10:00AM at ASTI Conference Room. Eligibility documents, technical and financial proposals (2 copies each) in three sealed envelopes must be submitted to ASTI-BAC Secretariat, ASTI Bldg. C.P. Garcia Ave., U.P. Diliman, Quezon City no later than the opening of bids at 2:00 p.m. on March 15, 2007.

For more information, please call the BAC Secretariat at Tel. No. 426-3694 or 426-9764 and you may look for Ms. Neth Caser or Ms. Liza Oleriana.

ASTI-BAC reserves the right to waive any formality in the response to the eligibility requirements and to this invitation. ASTI-BAC further reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, or declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) JOSE ERIC S. MAGLANQUE
Chairman

(PDI - February 28, 2007)


MOSSIMO BIKINI SUMMIT CANDIDATES SCREENED
Promark Industries, the licensee of Mossimo in the Philippines, together with Bikini Summit producers, The Village Advertising and Promotions, recently held the last screening dates for interested participants Feb. 26 and 27 at Mario's Tomas Morato, Quezon City. The 2007 Mossimo Bikini Summit raiding team, together with Jack Daniel's Tennessee Whiskey, will be visiting different bars in and around the metropolis with last year's winner Joyce So and her four 'body guards' to scout for potential finalists. Shown is 2006 Mossimo Bikini Summit grand prize winner Joyce So in Mint at The Fort scouting for potential 2007 finalists. For inquiries, e-mail mbs07village@yahoo.com, or log on to www.mbs07.com.

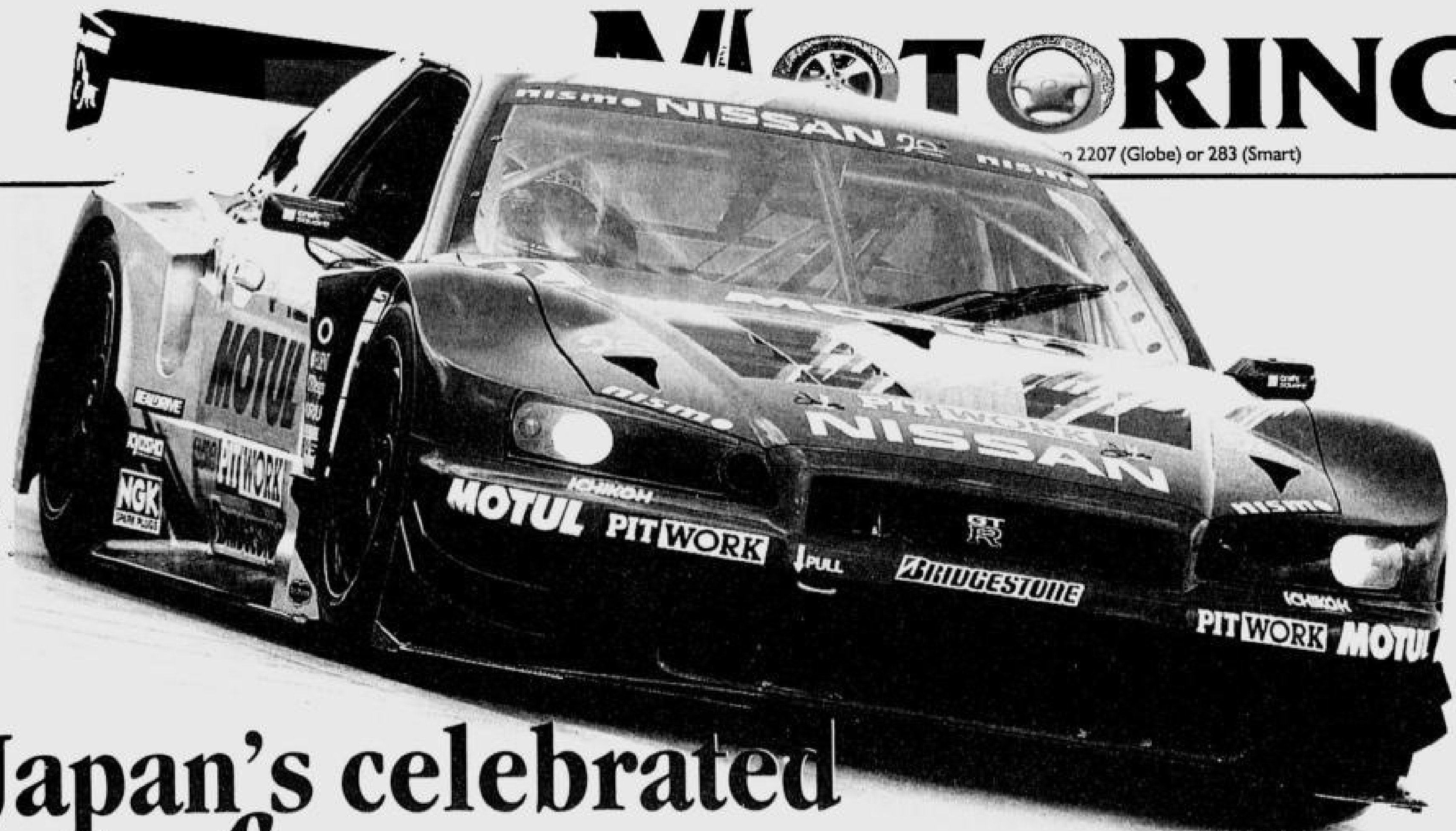
AUSTRALIA CELEBRATES NATIONAL DAY
The Embassy of Australia celebrated its National Day at the Mandarin Ballroom, Mandarin Oriental Manila in Makati Avenue Jan. 26. Members of the diplomatic corps, government officials, media and friends of the embassy attended the celebration. Shown are (from left) Arlene Llasos Jacobo, president, San Marcelino Medical Clinic, Angeles 'Toto' R. Santocildes, Australia Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Anthony John Hely, Madame Nicola Rosenzweig, Major Paul Rosenzweig, Australian Army, Assistant Defense Attache, and Fredric Monsod Alegre, president, Philippine Marketing Association.

MOTORING

E-mail: pr_motoring@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)



THIS Nissan Skyline GT-R is an icon for power, speed and advanced automotive technology.

Japan's celebrated performance car to visit RP

Filipino racing fans will see the iconic car up close

By Charles E. Buban

AS THE WORLD EAGERLY awaits the arrival of the next-generation Nissan Skyline GT-R (R35), it's only fitting to appreciate the car's current version that made this Japanese super sports car an icon for power, speed and advanced automotive technology.

"Successive generations of the Skyline GT-R have consistently pursued the vision of ultimate driving pleasure. The car has earned its reputation and iconic status, thanks to its performance on track but more especially on the street, where it has gained an underground following in Japan as well as in the United States," informed Carlos Gono, Autoplus Sportzentrium managing partner.

Autoplus Sportzentrium is one of the country's top tuning firms and exclusive distributor of Motul, a brand known for its high performance lubricants, as well as sponsor to some of the biggest race teams in the world.

Up close

Autoplus Sportzentrium recently announced it will bring the No. 22 Motul Pitwork Skyline GT-R here to let its Filipino fans see the iconic car up close.

"This car is the real deal as it is the actual car used by racers Masami Kageyama and Richard Lyons in the Super GT and Fuji GT 500. And while the car is on display, we will also be offering several Motul Pitwork merchandise and accessories. This is one of Motul's way of giving something back to our loyal customers," Gono said.

The car will initially be on display at the Manila International Auto Show in March and afterward complete its month-long tour in select malls in Metro Manila.

Introduced in 1969

Although the first Skyline came to the market in May 1965 (by Prince, a Japanese carmaker, which was taken over by Nissan in 1967), it took 12 years before the first Skyline GT-R was finally introduced and entered into the racing scene (making its race debut in the Japan Automobile Federation Grand Prix in May 1969).

"Originally made for the Japanese touring car racing, the Skyline GT-R was so successful in the late 1980s that the series was disbanded as nobody could get close to these cars or stop them from winning every one of the last season's 29 races," Gono shared.

Indeed, as one of Japan's most celebrated performance cars, the Skyline GT-R has developed an immense racing pedigree that includes over 200 race wins, five consecutive championship wins in the All Japanese Touring Car Championships and the unofficial lap record for a production car at the world-famous Nürburgring motorsport racetrack in Germany.

These days, the Skyline GT-R remains as the popular car of choice for import drag racing, time attack and drift competitions worldwide.

Another moment

MY DRIFT

Andre Palma

PULLING OUT OF A PARKING lot, I found that it was raining Sunday night—a little strange for the incoming summer season but not something completely unwelcome. Small drops fell at first, the kind that just dotted a windscreen and took a while to roll down. A sheer film of water, grime and grease lined the way home, nothing really dangerous but a road condition that just made cars really, really dirty. There went another day-old wax job, right down the proverbial drain.

The sprinkling then became a steady shower. There was really no motivation in me to up the pace home so I tucked into a slow lane and drove along with the rest of traffic. Coming up was a U-turn that was very familiar and saying it's been taken a hundred times was an understatement. A thousand times in the last two years, maybe, but this turn-about is still taken gingerly to this day. Caution, like patience, is one of those virtues that just keep us alive. Car and driver made it around safely and the trip home continued.

No choice

Merging with quicker cars that were barreling down a flyover, there was no choice but to kick up the speed a little. Nothing says traffic accident clearer than a slug slow merge onto fast flowing traffic, in a hazy drizzle at night.

I began to apply steady pressure on the accelerator for the anticipated merge and was treated to a pleasant surprise. The gaze in the side view mirror revealed that nothing was coming down the flyover. Looking ahead also showed a relatively clear way.

Something snapped in my head and my right foot started to encourage a little more speed from the throaty lawnmower engine of my daily drive. The sound of tires displacing water was getting louder and the pitch was getting higher. The all too-familiar noises of a car, reaching speed on wet tarmac was getting me excited. The acceleration continued.

The rain has faltered but not completely stopped. Running in third gear, in mid rpm the car was hurtling close to a hundred. A streetlamp's reflection then announced a rather substantial puddle of standing water but it was just too late to avoid it. The throttle lifted a bit and steadied, no use unbalancing the car at this moment as the water and the slight road camber would likely take care of that. I held my breath.

Large splash

There was a large splash but not enough to put water on my windshield. There was the ripping sound of water in the wheel wells. The front end lost slight contact with the road and was tugged ever so slightly to the right but the rears stayed planted with only the suspension giving a little twitch to the left. Tracking straight through, the eternity in the puddle was over, the push ended and the drive continued at a reduced pace.

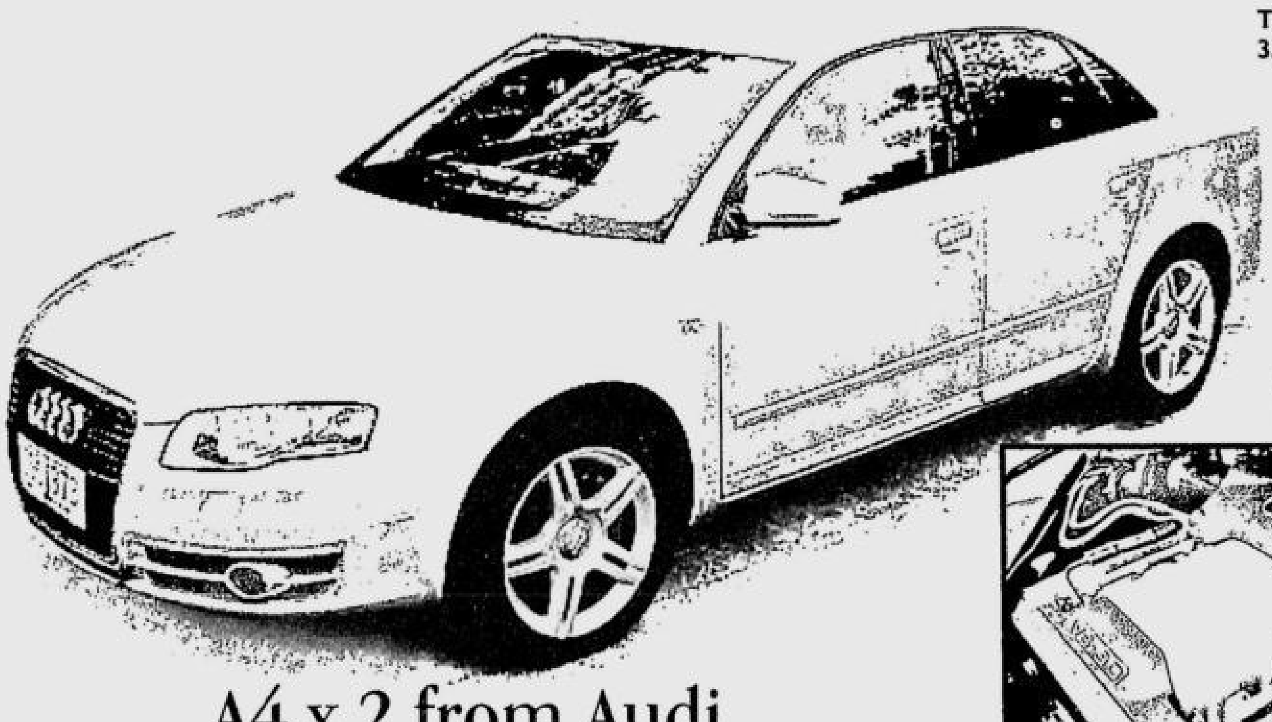
Cresting the last flyover before the final turn home, the road opened up again with even fewer cars and less visible standing water. The throttle went in for the last dash. This time third gear was finished, the engine close to redline and the digital speedometer reading way north of a hundred.

Spying the concrete traffic bollards that mark the usual braking point for the corner, the decision—was made to apply the brakes early—it was wet after all and the standing water in the bus lane meant I'm turning in from the third lane. Everything was thankfully clear.

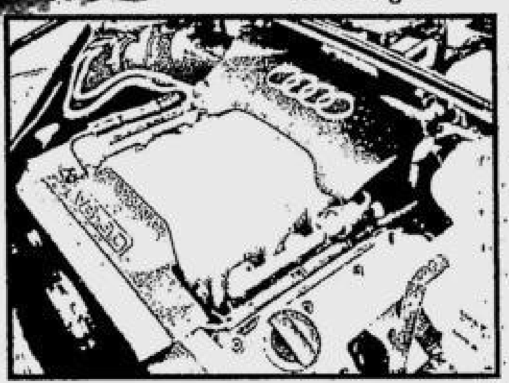
Smell of everything

The car came in hotter than usual and way out of balance, most of the weight on the front tires from all the braking. Lifting the throttle a smidge allowed the turn to be made but the excess speed was making the car unhappy, leaning it way to one side. A slight tug of the wheel in the opposite direction of the lean and a snap lift of the accelerator initiated a small slide which was over in moments.

Nothing dramatic and spectacular, but that romp was just enough to give me a fix. After clearing the subdivision gate, the open car windows allowed me to take in the smell of everything the drizzle has made wet. The smell of the brakes was noticeable over that of the rain. I broke out into a grin, lighted a cigarette and thanked the heavens for another moment in the rain.



THE AUDI A4 3.0-liter V6



THE 220-HP A4 3.0 V6 engine

A4 x 2 from Audi

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

THE A4 WAS INTRODUCED IN THE MID-1990s by Audi AG as a sport-oriented entry-luxury car competing with the likes of the BMW 3 Series and the Mercedes C-Class. The launch of the A4 line was a huge success and lifted the Ingolstadt-based Bavarian premium carmaker out of its late 1980s and early 1990s doldrums.

Redesigned for 2002 and refreshed last year, the A4 is now in its third generation with the 2007 models essentially unchanged from 2006. The A4 comes in three body styles—saloon/sedan, wagon (the Avant) and convertible (Cabriolet)—and either front-wheel-drive or permanent all-wheel-drive (Quattro). In the Philippines, PGA Cars sells the sedans and the Avant.

While the A4 Quattros are equipped with either a 6-speed manual transmission (MT) or 6-speed automatic transmission (AT), the front-wheel-drive A4s come only with a continuously variable transmission (CVT), the multitronic AT. A more advanced tiptronic 6-speed AT comes with the higher-end Quattro models.

NOT much leg room in the back of an A4

THE COCKPIT of the A4 1.8T Quattro

(PHOTOS BY AIDA SEVILLA MENDOZA)

Top-end

The top-end models, the 4.2-liter V8 RS4 sedan and the A4 2.0 Turbo FSi tiptronic, reportedly carry price tags higher than the Audi TT sports car's. The price factor places them beyond the entry-luxury range. Small wonder that PGA Cars did not submit the RS4 and A4 FSi to the Car of the Year (Coty) testing sessions.

Still, driving the less pricey A4 models is an exhilarating experience. I enjoyed driving the A4 1.8T multitronic at the Coty test session for luxury cars last January, but driving the A4 1.8T Quattro MT (P3.130 million) over a four-day weekend was even more exciting. Driving the A4 3.0-liter V6 AT (P3.850 million) on another weekend further confirmed Audi AG's fulfillment of its promise to supply the world with a competitive entry-luxury sports compact series in the A4 line.

While multitronic would make driving the A4 1.8 AT easier in congested stop-and-go city traffic, the crisp-shifting 6-speed manual transmission and suspension dynamics of the A4 1.8T Quattro provide more urgent delivery of turbocharged power and better handling on twisty as well as straight open roads. Not to mention surefooted traction on slippery or muddy roads, thanks to Quattro hardware and the automatic locking Torsen center differential.

Turbocharged

Powered by Audi's 4-cylinder-in-line, 20-valve 1.8-liter DOHC turbocharged gasoline engine, the A4 1.8T Quattro packs 163 hp max output at 5,700 rpm and 225 Nm max torque at 1,950-4,700 rpm with a top speed of 226 kph and zero to 100 kph in 8.7 seconds. Fully electronic engine management with electronic accelerator, Bosch ME7 ensures crisp linear response. It helps overcome the subtle turbo lag quickly and to spread the torque across the widest band.

On the A4 1.8T Quattro as well as the A4 3.0-liter V6, a diagonally split dual-circuit braking system and disc brakes fore and aft equipped with ABS, EBD and tandem brake booster provide sharp stopping power. Fitted with a 4-link front axle and trapezoidal rear axle, the car rides firmly yet comfortably and is one of the most balanced cars in the entry-luxury segment.

Since it is an Audi tradition to build cars vault-like solid with flawless fit and finish and richly equipped cabins, both the A4 1.8T Quattro and A4 3.0 liter V6 are impressive inside and out. Inside, black leather seats, silver inlays, dual climate control, center display and driver information system, Bose sound system with 10 loudspeakers and six-disc CD changer, electronically adjustable driver's seat with memory function—among other things. Outside, taut contours, muscular flanks, big wheel arches, 5-spoke cast aluminum wheels, deep-set bumpers, shallow glass area, xenon headlamps with daylight mode.

ESP 8.0

Aside from ABS with EBD on 4-wheel disc brakes, both Audi models have eight airbags, active head restraints in front, the Electronic Stabilization Program, ESP 8.0, rear parking sensors, remote keyless entry and electronic immobilizer.

While not as intensely obsessing to drive as the 1.8T Quattro MT, the A4 3.0 liter V6 multitronic is animated by a more powerful, sweet-burbling engine, the 3.0-liter 30-valve V6 DOHC producing 220 hp at 6,200 rpm and 300 Nm/3,200 max torque with a top speed of 240 kph and 0 to 100 kph in 6.9 seconds. Servotronic regulates steering assistance according to speed. As a front-wheel-drive Audi, the A4 3.0 V6 is equipped with a CVT multitronic that functions like an AT but has no fixed gear ratios. The cast aluminum wheels are bigger at 17" x 7.5".

Some people say that Audi cars are not as razor-sharp as BMW cars. Based on my experience with the A4 1.8T Quattro MT and the A4 3.0 V6 multitronic, I disagree. Not only are A4s as sporty as the BMW 3 Series, they have a higher, richer level of equipment inside.

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: Heart attack: God's revenge for eating his animal friends.

BUSINESS

Ecozone exports up 17%

Laguna Technopark, Gateway top performers in Jan.

THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC ZONES posted a 17.2 percent growth in export receipts last January to $3.03 billion from year-ago's $2.58 billion, according to the Philippine Economic Zone Authority.

Peza reported that the four public ecozones yielded $576 million in export receipts last month, up 9.4 percent from $570.9 million in January last year.

Among the four public ecozones, Baguio City Economic Zone exported about $253.7 million worth of goods; Cavite Economic Zone, $195.05 million; Mactan Economic Zone, $101.6 million, and Bataan Economic Zone, $25.9 million.

The Cavite ecozone posted an 11.6-percent growth while Baguio posted 2.2 percent. Bataan and Mactan reported decline in shipments by 21.7 percent and 11.5 percent, respectively.

At least 41 private or special economic zones (SEZs) shipped out $2.3 billion worth of products, up by 18.9 percent from year-ago's $1.96 billion.

The top five SEZ exporters were Laguna Technopark Inc. at $593.9 million; Gateway Business Park, $588.6 million; Amkor Technology SEZ, $146 million; Carmelray Industrial Park I, $137.5 billion and Leyte Industrial Development Estate, $105.7 million.

Of the five, Gateway Business Park posted the best performance with a 52.2-percent growth, while Leyte Industrial improved by 30.4 percent and Laguna Technopark by 27.2 percent.

Information technology parks and buildings—numbering at least 40—posted the highest growth with total receipts growing by 121.2 percent to $127.4 million from $57.6 million last year.

The top five earners among IT buildings and parks in January were Eastwood City Cyber Park at $14.8 million; PBCom Tower, $11.7 million; RCBC Plaza, $10.3 million; Asia Town IT Park, $5.5 million, and Union-Bank Plaza, $4.9 million.

NFA earmarking ₱28B for rice procurement

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY HAS earmarked P28 billion for its domestic and foreign rice procurement program for 2007, NFA Administrator Jessup Navarro said yesterday.

For the local procurement program beginning this summer, about P3 billion was set by the NFA, Navarro told the INQUIRER.

Tasked to ensure food security and price stability, the NFA has to maintain a buffer stock of rice. It buys palay from farmers particularly during the peak of the harvest season to build up a buffer stock that would be sold during lean season.

If local production falls short of demand, NFA imports rice to fill the gap and maintain the desired level of inventory.

Navarro said the agency would again seek the finance department's approval for its borrowing limits this year. In 2006, the Department of Finance set a P20-billion borrowing ceiling for NFA.

The NFA has been resorting to government-guaranteed borrowings since the budget it gets from the national government falls short of its actual requirement. NFA's loans usually come from government-owned and -controlled commercial banks.

The state-owned trading firm has been criticized for its huge losses, reaching P33 billion in the last three years.

"This is due to our mandate to buy palay at a higher price to benefit farmers and sell at a low price to benefit the consumers," he explained.

In a bid to bring down its losses this year, the NFA is asking the DOF to defer the collection of P13 billion in tariffs on the rice importation it made in the past years.

Since 2002, the agency has been paying as much as 50 percent tariff on its rice importation and this, he said, was a heavy burden to the NFA.

"We actually borrow from local banks to pay these duties and because of this, our interest expense reached P2 billion," he said.

Another option to ease the agency's financial burden, former NFA Administrator Gregorio Tan Jr. said in another interview, was for the agency to assign its import rights to private groups.

With international rice prices now ranging from $250 to $270 per metric ton, the country's rice imports this year could cost P15- P20 billion, given the projected rice production shortfall of about 1.4 million metric tons.

PAL in talks with lenders for refleeting plan

PHILIPPINE AIRLINES SAID IT WOULD BORROW from export agencies and banks about 85 percent of the $750-million funding requirement for its refleeting program, PAL president Jaime Bautista said.

The balance, Bautista said, would be covered by the company's internally-generated funds.

At the sidelines of a presscon held by the Lucio Tan Group's newly launched property firm, Bautista said PAL had received more than 10 proposals from prospective lenders.

PAL is expecting the delivery this year of the new planes it purchased: Two aircraft in April (Airbus 319 and Airbus 320); another Airbus 320 in May and four more aircraft between July and December.

With the additional capacity from the new aircraft, PAL expects to carry 7 million passengers this year, up from 6 million last year.

PAL also plans to increase flights to Vancouver, Beijing and Nagoya. *Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson*

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2BU! EXCLUS

Heartbreak girl no more

Rachael Yamagata is proving to be more than 'the voice of the lovelorn generation'

By Pam Pastor

RACHAEL YAMAGATA spent Valentine's Day at a bar where her friend works, helping pour drinks for "sweet loners."

While Rachael might make a good bartender in an alternate universe—the kind people keep going back to for a double dose of vodka and love advice—in this world, the lovelorn turn to her songs for a bit of comfort and sympathy.

With song lyrics like "I'm afraid, and I can't breathe/And I'm in love with you/But you are not with me" and "Worn me down like a road/I did everything you told/Worn me down to my knees/I did everything to please/But you can't stop thinking about her," the lonely find a kindred soul in Rachael.

The US-based Japanese-German-Italian singer-songwriter is no stranger to heartbreaks and breakups—you can even say her solo career started with one.

Rachael had been singing for the Chicago funk band Bumpus for almost five years when she left and broke up with her boyfriend who was the group's guitarist. She quit the boy and the band and took her big cliff jump—performing in Chicago's club circuit, finally singing the piano-driven songs she had been secretly penning for years.

The risk was well worth it. Soon, word spread about Rachael's emotionally charged shows, beautiful music and raw lyrics. She released a five-track EP (plus one bonus song) in 2003 under BMG and it won critics over. Her full-length debut "Happenstance," which was released in early 2004, received even more attention.

Constant comparison

Soon, everyone—from Teen Vogue and YM to Rolling Stone and The New York Times—was writing about her, dropping phrases like "gorgeous effortlessness," "heart-tugging" and "soul-soothing" to describe Rachael and her music. She was included in countless "must watch out for" and "next big thing" lists.

But coupled with the attention was the constant comparison to Fiona Apple and Norah Jones which Rachael likened to "being compared to a great ex-girlfriend" in an interview with a magazine. "One part of me is really flattered but there's this other part of me that's weirdly jealous. At a certain point, I think, I can't measure up to that. Can we stop talking about her? Maybe we can just keep talking about me?" she said in the interview.

For a long time, talk revolved about how much of Rachael's music is about failed relationships. Journalists had a blast tagging her as "the poster girl for the brokenhearted" and "the voice of the lovelorn generation."

She has mixed feelings about these labels, Rachael said in an online interview with 2bU! "Only because it doesn't say who I am as a whole. I write when I'm moved about something. Relationships and human struggles of all kinds move me. The basic emotions and conflicts of these things, to me, are universal whether you are talking about war, or love, or business, etc."

"I hate to portray myself as someone only concerned with love by being coined 'the heartbreak girl,' when really I'm focused on the struggle to keep going and overcome conflict and still retain optimism and hope. It's broader than just a breakup."

Just getting started

It's been over two years since the release of Rachael's first full-length album and a lot of things have already happened. Aside from traveling to different parts of the US and the world on tour, she has fronted for Liz Phair, toured with Ryan Adams, written songs with Mandy Moore, and recorded duets with Jason Mraz Rhett Miller and Ben Arthur. Her songs also appear on the soundtracks of several films and TV shows including "Prime," "The Last Kiss" and "Nip/Tuck," and she had a memorable guesting on "The OC" where she sang the song "The Reason Why."

And she's only getting started. 2bU! spoke to Rachael about her new album, breakups, love, her fans and her big passion for music.

What can fans look forward to in your next album? How different will it be from "Happenstance"?

The new record is an evolution

HEARTBREAK/ C2

RACHAEL YAMAGATA is known for his dynamic sets and humor when playing live.

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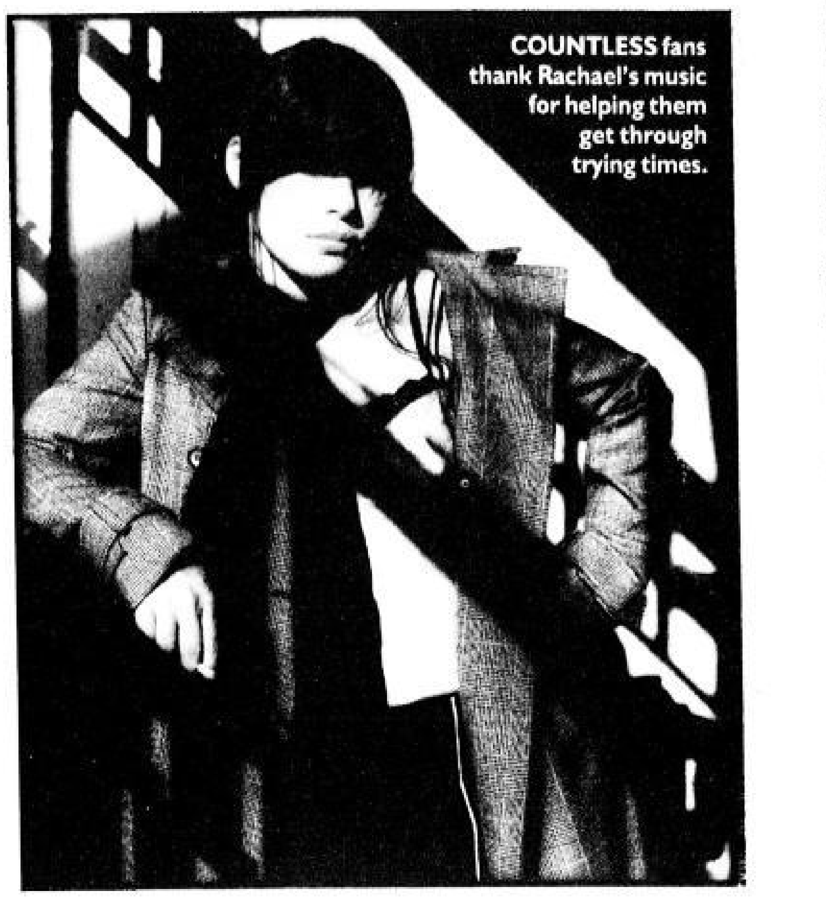
SMART TAYO

"I THINK honesty is the most important thing for my songwriting which leads me to live a lonely existence of rehashing the muddy waters of my faults and love tragedies," Rachael wrote in her online journal.

Heartbreak girl no more



COUNTLESS fans thank Rachael's music for helping them get through trying times.

FANS have stood in the rain and have driven long distances to see a glimpse of Rachael.

From page C1

of sorts on all fronts really. Musically, I gravitated toward a riskier palette. I still kept the lush strings, but we went further with them in arrangements, added some woodwinds and french horn. I loved strange textures—some marimba or left of center drumming, moog, tape running in the background, rain, wind howling. We even have some Jack Daniels bottles clanking away somewhere. The high-energy rock tunes are really powerful and sometimes trippy, while the ballads are still right there in terms of vulnerability. Lyrically, I got a bit more poetic on some, metaphors and layers and all that fun stuff. On the whole, it's a bit darker, grittier.

Which stage of the next album are you working on now?

I'm trying not to drive myself crazy and switch the sequence! Hahaha! It's all about artwork now.

A lot of your songs are inspired by relationships gone wrong. Does writing about such personal experiences act as a form of therapy to you? And do you never feel hesitant about being so honest?

I try to look at them as relationships "gone real." I suppose it is therapeutic to write them out and process what has happened. I do more of that in my songwriting than I do in conversations with other people. I think it just comes out more fully for me when I can add a melody and a turn of phrase. I don't hesitate about being so forthcoming because that's what makes it real for me and that's what resonates, but I do get nervous when people think they know me based solely off my songs.

Do you want to erase the "heartbreak girl" or "voice of the lovelorn generation" label?

Hmm. Good question. I have family and close friends that I still feel don't "get me" so I'm not expecting the rest of the world to ever really know me the way I know me. It's so easy to get caught up in that, so I try to stay focused on just writing truthfully and not thinking about who will label me what.

How do you feel about people turning to your music during breakups?

I've had people tell me that a particular song has "saved their life" during such times, and get constant feedback that I've managed to say the very things they couldn't put into words. It's priceless to me to think some connection or relief could come from something I've written.

What songs do you listen to during breakups?

I don't. I just watch 'The Way We Were' over and over again.

Can you give our readers tips on surviving a breakup?

Be kind to yourself. Do things that are focused on you, whether going to the gym or eating ice cream, talking with friends or just hiding away for a bit. I think some form of closure is valuable whether it's writing all the things you loved and things you didn't, even if no one ever reads them but you. And don't give up. There are lessons in everything. The potential to be enriched by relationships is never ending. The more perfect situation will come if you just trust that it will.

How do you stay sane while on tour? It must be crazy to be on the move constantly.

It is! But I love it. Surround yourself with fun people to be on the road with. Less is more for your suitcase. And private time when you can get it is great. I tend to get up early in the mornings and just a walk for coffee can really settle you down.

Does your music get in the way of romance? Are guys sometimes afraid that you would write songs about them?

I've had more guys hope I write a song about them. Haha. Some think a particular song is about them and it isn't, and vice versa. Guys are more afraid that I'll forget about them. I have the worst memory on the planet.

At the start of your solo career, when the press kept comparing you to Fiona Apple, Norah Jones and other female artists, I loved how you said that it was like being compared to a great ex-girlfriend. What do you say to guys who like doing that?

Hilarious! I love that you saw that! Hmm... I'm only learning my lessons in that respect now. I'm a big fan of not knowing too much about the exes. I've been on both sides—the new girl, the old girl—so I can appreciate the nature of the situation. I figure if someone isn't interested in me right now in their life then I'm not the one for them. Past loves have the power to make you grow as a person, but if you are living in the past, I say no thanks to that.

Is it true that you've made exes cry because of your songs? And is it also true that you cry sometimes during performances?

I have made exes cry from the songs. Which I love because I was probably crying when I wrote them and if they are moved by them in that way, then I know I captured the essence of something powerful. I have cried during performances, but it's rare—one was after someone close to me had died and maybe one other time when something was just really recent. I'm more often drunk and being hilarious, actually.

Does your background in theater and as the singer of a funk band come into play in your performances today?

Hmm... Well, I kind of got kicked out of acting class so I'm not sure how great I was in theater. Bumpus definitely taught me a lot about playing live and reeling in the audience with a dynamic set.

You play the guitar, piano and flute, right? Have you added any other instruments to that list? And which do you love the most?

I kind of have little affairs with all instruments. I wrote a bit on bass and am fascinated by the drums. That's the next thing I'd like to investigate. I'd love to try a string instrument because it's just so physically and sonically effective. But I'm also obsessed with the production side of things as well so there's always plenty to learn.

How do you psyche yourself up for a gig?

I drink like a fish and hope I will be able to stand. I have stage fright.

Any unforgettable gigs?

Detroit Fox Theater opening for David Gray—4,000 people. It was my first really big show as a solo act. I was so petrified and the audience and I just clicked. It was pin-drop silent during the songs and then crashing applause. Beginner's luck perhaps, but so magical. I played Madison Square Garden five nights later with Mr. Gray and I still remembered the Detroit show.

Which is your favorite song to play?

It changes. Right now it's a new song, 'Sunday Afternoon.' It's kind of epic and the band just trips out on it in this wannabe-Zeppelin way. I love playing that one.

Do you have any favorite lyrics from your songs?

I've always liked one from 'Ode To,' the hidden track from the first record. "That's good/that's fine/that's nice/I understand the price/the cost of craving dark instead of light." And I've got a new song, 'Elephants.' "So for those of you falling in love/keep it kind/keep it good/keep it right/throw yourself in the midst of danger/but keep one eye open at night."

Is there any musician you want to collaborate with?

Wow. Joni Mitchell, Rickie Lee Jones, Tom Waits, Elton John, Paul Simon, The Black Crowes, Timbaland. The list can go on and on.

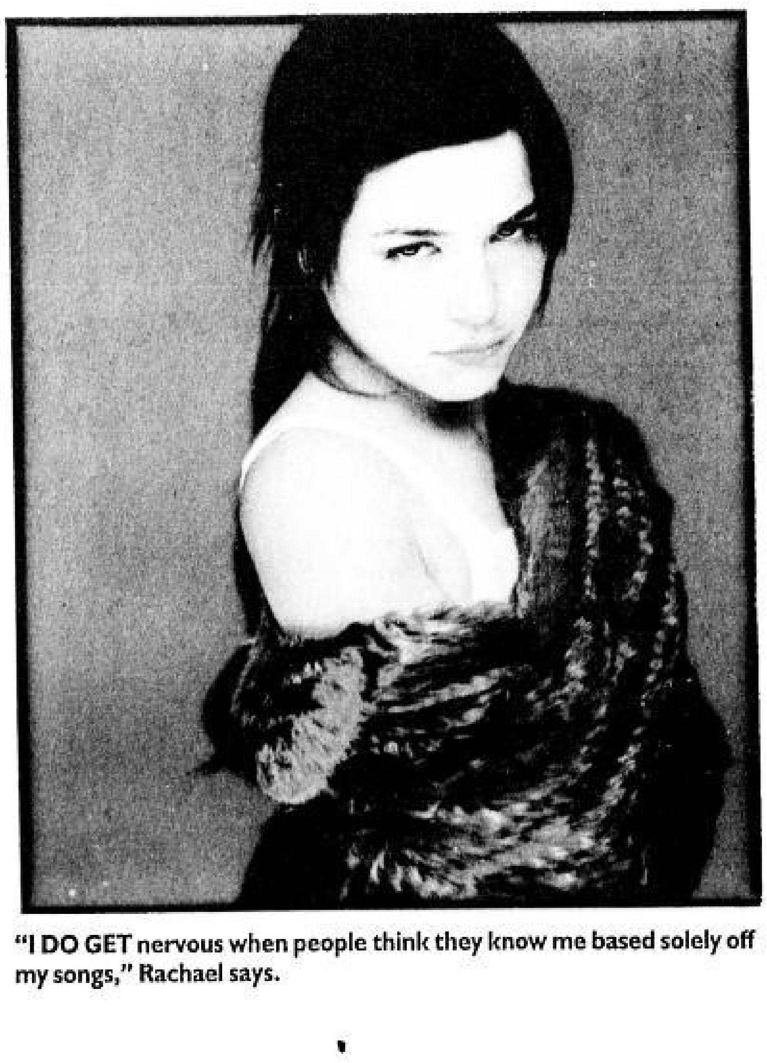
What is the best thing a fan has said to you about your music?

Probably that they felt I wrote the song just for them.

What's the sweetest thing a fan's ever done for you?

Wow. I couldn't even begin to say. I love my fans. They write me the most heartfelt messages, stand in the rain to say hello, drive crazy distances just to see a show, etc. All of it keeps me going in ways they'll never even know.

E-mail the author at ppastor@inquirer.com.ph



"I DO GET nervous when people think they know me based solely off my songs," Rachael says.

FORGET FIONA. Rachael Yamagata makes her own kind of music.

Can we still be friends?

By Sarah Ang
2bU! Contributor

I WAS BROWSING THROUGH my 2006 planner this morning when I saw this excerpt from a profile I wrote for one of my writing classes: "He had always been aware that the gods of fate sometimes allow mortals to win back loves and lives lost, but he had never really known, with this much certainty, that second chances can actually be as sweet as this."

What is it with people and do-overs? What is it about getting and giving second chances that attract us so much? Why do we fall in love with the idea of returning to what is comfortable, familiar... flawed?

That was my problem for so long. Was. Because now, more than a year after we tried to make it work for the last time and eight months after we gave up completely, I finally understand.

We held on because we were united against a common enemy. It was you and me against the world; we basked in the Romeo and Juliet-ness of it all. We held on because we knew each other more than anybody else did, perhaps more than anybody else ever would.

We held on because we liked telling people, often as nonchalantly as possible: "Oh, we've been together since high school." Love's sweeter the second time around, third time's the charm... We ran out of cliches and lost track of how many times we've rationalized our way through all the damage we've done, but honestly? We didn't care.

After the breakup, we tried to be friends. But it was hard to be buddies with you because our relationship was never platonic—the attraction was there from the moment we first met. We still tried, though. We tried meeting up for lunch or a movie without putting any romantic meaning to it. We tried texting each other every day, asking how the person is, staying in touch.

But every time we got together, we just ended up arguing over what went wrong and whose fault it was. I couldn't tell you about the cute guy who asked for my number, and you couldn't tell me about the girl your friends were planning to set you up with.

When we weren't fighting, we were getting too close for comfort. One time, we even ended up holding hands before I realized that if I didn't stop seeing you, I would never be able to get over you—and I didn't want that.

The "friendship stage" lasted for a grand total of two weeks. I guess the futile friendship attempt was the last straw in holding on and making a relationship—even a non-romantic one—between us work.

We held on for all the wrong reasons. And now that you are almost a stranger to me, I realize that I had let go, at last, for all the right ones.

Last week, I needed to get in touch with you for something work-related, but you weren't replying to my messages. I wanted to call you at home but I realized—with more surprise than disappointment—that I had forgotten your landline number, and to think we used to talk on the phone every day.

I haven't heard from you in months. I am clueless as to what you're doing with your life right now, or who you're going out with at the moment. I don't even know if you're still in the country. I think a common friend told me your company was planning to send you abroad.

I'm not sure if I'll ever be ready to become friends with you. I'm aware that it works for some people, but I seriously doubt it will do us any good, because the truth is, I am fine without you.

Perhaps a few months from now, I'd like to catch up with you, maybe have coffee or dessert. I have no idea when I'll get to speak to you again, but I do hope that when that time comes, you will have nothing but good news for me—and you will be happy and healthy and content with your life. Because I know I will be.

I wish you well and I mean it.

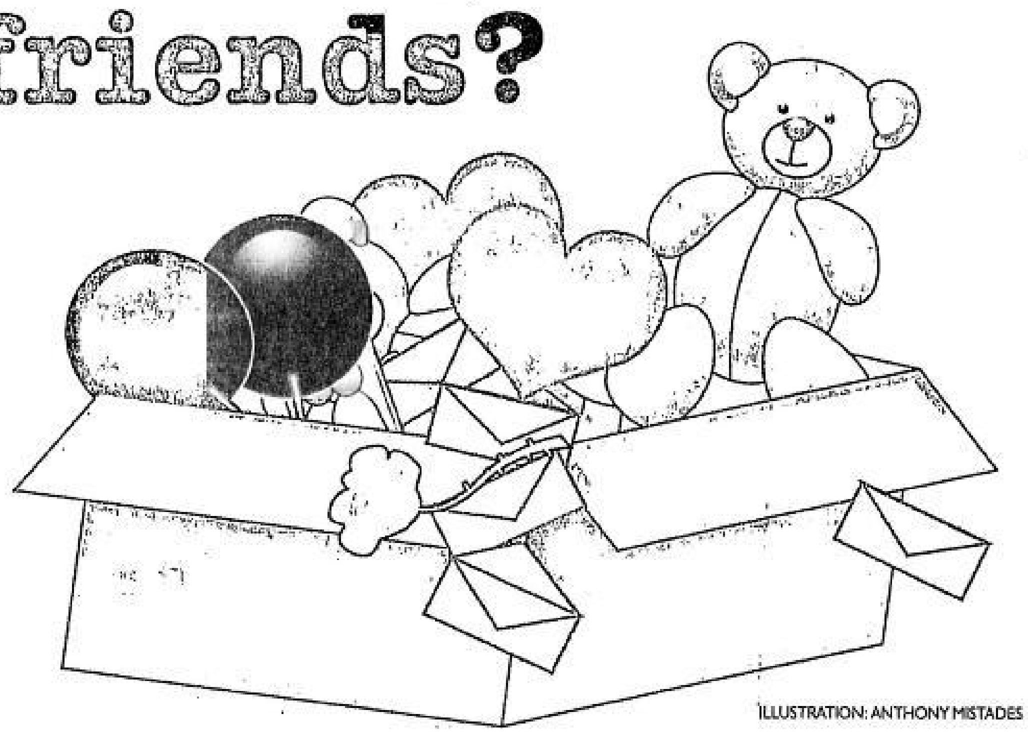


ILLUSTRATION: ANTHONY MISTADES

What is it with people and do-overs? What is it about getting and giving second chances that attract us so much?

Rizal College of Taal reunion

CLASS 1957 OF RIZAL COLLEGE IN Taal, Batangas will hold its golden jubilee reunion on March 10, at Rizal College-Buliran.

There will be an 8 a.m. thanksgiving mass at the Basilica of St. Martin of Tours in Taal, followed by the release of balloons in honor of departed alumni.

There will also be a motorcade through Lemery and Taal. Lunch will be at Rizal College-Buliran. At 2 p.m. will be the launching of the Golden Jubilee Reunion Journal. There will also be special numbers and raffle prizes. Capping the day is an early-evening dinner party.

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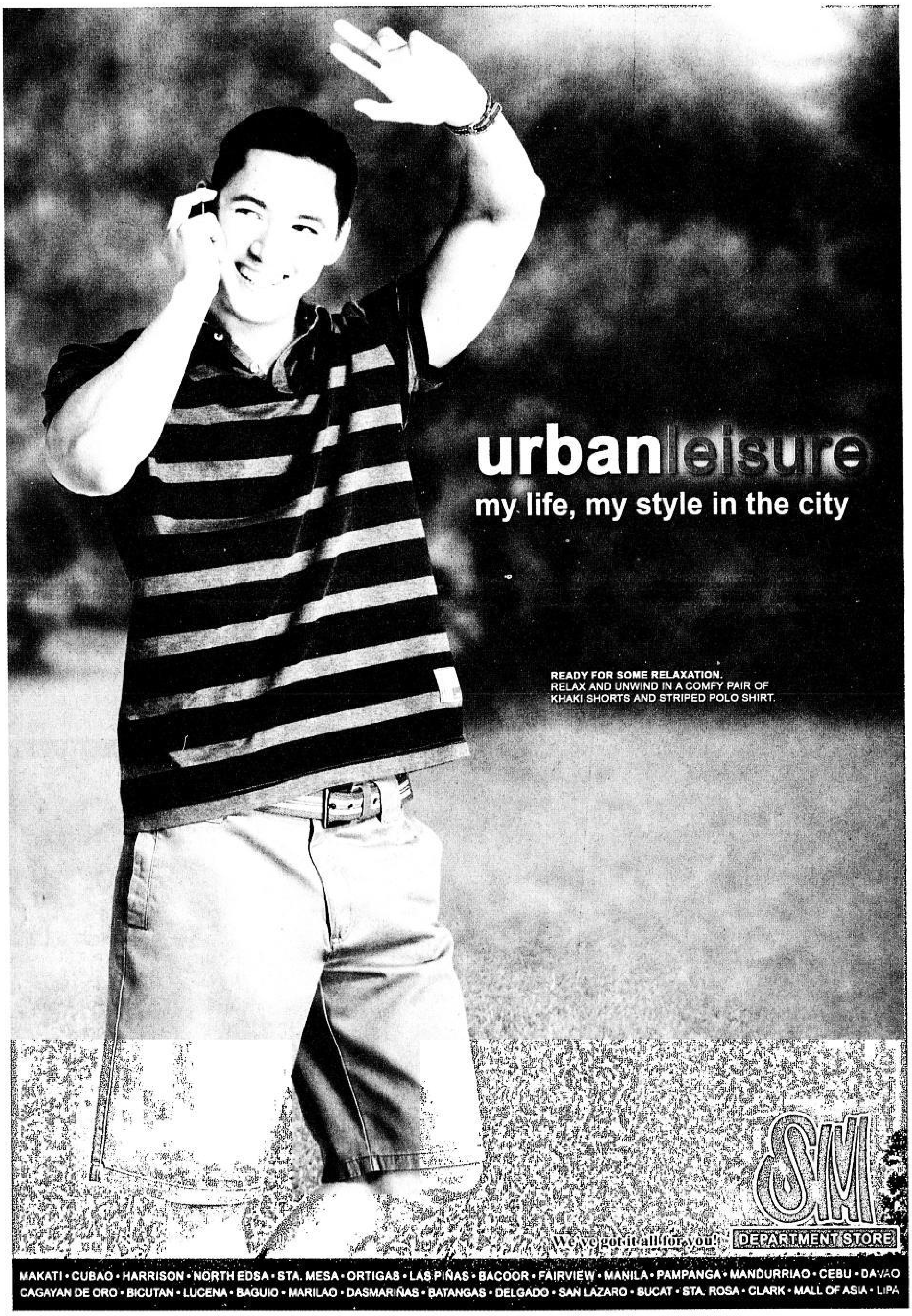
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BUSUANGA

MANY wanted to date heartthrob Mark Herras but only one privileged participant got to have dinner with the StarStruck hottie.

EVEN with great musical performances, games and celebrities onstage, the speed daters were serious and focused on getting to know potential partners.

SPEED dating is a huge hit abroad and Animax thought of bringing it to the country as a Valentine's gift for all the singles out there.

Quick dates for the dateless

Nino Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

IF YOU THINK THAT VALENTINE'S IS JUST for married couples, engaged lovers or romantic pairs, then you're wrong. Valentine's Day—and the whole love month—can also be for those with unrequited love and for those who are simply in love with anyone or anything. It can be for the single ones, too.

Animax—the first anime-dedicated 24-hour cable and satellite TV channel in the region—loves singles so much that it staged Love is in the Air, a unique speed-dating extravaganza recently at the SM Mall of Asia.

Presented by Globe Broadband together with magazine partners A-LIST and Uno, the event was held to create speedy romance and to provide an opportunity for single people to meet.

And boy, the event was a hit, if solely based on the large number of looking-for-love singles who trooped to the mall. Many participants left the venue with giddy hearts. They exchanged phone numbers and agreed to go on a date.

To join the speed dating, youths and young adults between the ages of 18 and 30 were required to register online at www.animax-asia.com. Visitors to the Love is in the Air microsite were treated several features such as free Valentine's Day e-cards, love declarations on the Love Message board, love song dedications and various quirky love-personality quizzes.

The microsite has been a huge hit with over 2,000 love greetings sent and over 1,000 love songs dedicated in less than a month since the features were made available.

Love is in the Air was a great chance for young ones to find some romantic connection with others or have a fun time meeting like-minded people. Apart from the speed dating, there were also makeover booths, couples' photo booth, instant love messages and a DJ/spin booth with love song dedications during the ground-breaking event.

As if those weren't enough, Animax also threw in some great performances from singer Amber Rowley, Callalily band and All Stars dance group.

Date with the stars

As an exclusive treat, six lucky participants got an early V-Day dinner date with some of the country's hottest heartthrobs and head-turners led by GMA Artist Center's Mark Herras. Romantically unattached and dateless on Valentine's (he was supposed to be shooting an indie film on the big day), the talented dancer and actor admitted that his most memorable Valentine's date was with ex-girlfriend Jennylyn Mercado.

Other A-Listers raffled off as dates were hunky models Will Devaughn and Luke Jickain, plus Uno girls Isabel Oli, Maike Evers and Aiza Marquez.

To cap off the event, there was the much anticipated comeback gig of hot local band, Pupil, after lead vocalist Ely Buendia's recovery from a serious heart condition. Performing their hit singles plus a couple of songs from Ely's old band Eraserheads, the band brought the house down—a clear indication of just how much Ely and the rest of the band were missed.

Now one thing you should not miss is the chance to declare your love for your significant other or even just your secret crush on TV. Send in your Valentine's Month messages to 2959 and see your greetings live on Animax.

E-mail the author at marksablan_2bu@yahoo.com

MODELS Maike Evers and Will Devaughn were among the celebs raffled off as celeb dates for the speed daters.

CUTIE Aiza Marquez—who's going to appear in Uno magazine—was a big hit with the audience, especially high school boys.

WILL Devaughn of that McDonald's Rice Burger commercial had a lot of girls wanting to date him.

ELY Buendia and his band Pupil's much anticipated return to the stage took place at Love is in the Air last February 10.

CALLALILY rocked the Music Hall of the SM Mall of Asia to start the event.

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Phone cam photo tilt

A UNIQUE VIEW OF THE VIbrancy of Asia through the Sony Ericsson K800i Cyber-shot phone takes center stage in a new promotional campaign with National Geographic Channel.

Called Windows Into Asia, the joint campaign from the world's leading mobile phone manufacturer and TV's best world exploration channel features on-air vignettes, an online mobile phone photography contest, mobile downloads over www.ngcasia.com/windowsintoasia and a grand prize to Mongolia, the travel destination du jour.

Windows Into Asia offers budding phone camera photographers a chance to join this celebration of the region's unique culture through an online photography contest. Camera buffs may just fill up the contest form and submit a camera phone photo online. The mobile phone shot should capture the diverse lives, activities and culture of Asia anytime, anywhere, as well as display an inspiring and fresh perspective of this part of the world.

A panel of experts from the National Geographic Channel will judge the images based on creative interpretation, capacity to innovate originality, artistic execution and adept use of a camera phone's technical abilities. The contest is open only to residents and permanent residents aged 18 years old and above of the Philippines, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Singapore and Thailand.

First prize winner from each of the above seven countries will each receive one Sony Ericsson K800i Cyber-shot phone. Runners up will each receive other National Geographic Channel premiums. One grand prize winner will be picked among the seven first prize winners of each country to win a "Mongolia: Land of the Nomad" National Geographic Expedition in July 2007 for two.

With an integrated 3.2-megapixel digital camera with autofocus, Xenon flash and BestPic™ imaging technology, the K800i is perfectly designed for on-the-go photography.

Visit www.ngcasia.com/windowsintoasia.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2007

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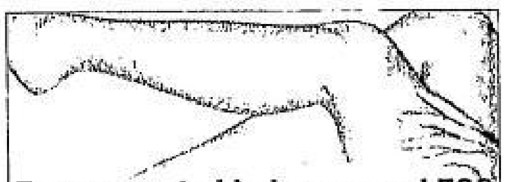

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PRETTY PRINCESS. Dress by Hallie Vy

Hello, gorgeous

It's time you skip the chiffon and opt for a more updated and short grad-ball dress to achieve that big-night glamour

WHOEVER SAID THAT parties allow only the requisite black has to think again.

According to designer Katrina Sy, the creative genius behind local fashion boutique Sy-Kat Couture, anything goes these days—from the color to the material, from the fancy embellishments to the length of your dress.

The old reliable chiffon (or at times, lace) should be given a rest.

"Your grad ball should be your night. Your dress should speak volumes about your personality. It's time we gave the tried-and-true lace, taffeta and chiffon gowns a rest," she says. "Who would want their grad ball to look more like a Santacruzan than an affair to remember, anyway?"

While long evening gowns are reserved for the red carpet and formal gatherings, cocktail dresses—fun, flirty, and feminine—are the norm today in parties and other social events.

"An inch exactly below the knee is the new hem zone," Sy says. "These dresses suggest that the wearer is young and hip and mobile. They can also mean that she doesn't exert too much effort in dressing.

"Like platforms, which took a resurgence a couple of months back on the international

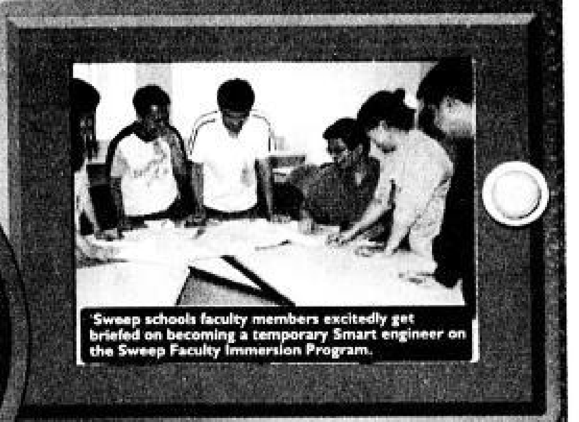
HELLO/ D3

SWEEP Awards in year 3

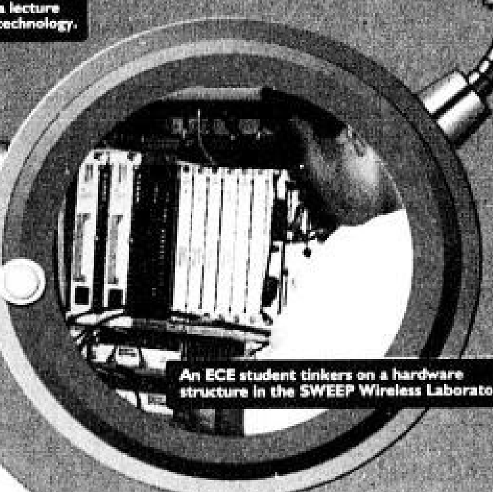
P1M prize for innovative apps

Students rejoice on stage with Smart President and CEO Napoleon L. Nazareno for their big win during last year's Sweep Innovation and Excellence Awards.

Sweep Wireless Laboratories: Teachers listen to a lecture given by one of Smart's engineers about cellular technology.



Sweep schools faculty members excitedly get briefed on becoming a temporary Smart engineer on the Sweep Faculty Immersion Program.



An ECE student tinkers on a hardware structure in the SWEEP Wireless Laboratory.

Competing schools outwit each other in 2004's PalaECEpan quiz bee competition.

Some of the country's most promising Electronics and Communications Engineering (ECE) students will pitch their best work for the final judging of the SMART Wireless Engineering Education Program (SWEEP) Innovation and Excellence Awards on March 9 and 10 at the Music Hall of the SM Mall of Asia.

Inspired by the theme, "Safety through Connectivity," the students were challenged to come up with mobile solutions that will help empower communities through secure and reliable machine-to-machine (M2M) wireless communication systems.

P 1 Million Grand Prize

Ten finalists from all over the Philippines are vying for bragging rights and a grand prize of P500,000 for the students, plus a P500,000 grant for the school. The end stretch also promises to be even more exciting with a host of fun and tech-driven activities. Interactive booths will allow visitors to sample the latest mobile innovations. Free Internet surfing, online gaming, and raffle draws are sure to fire up visitors to the exhibit.

"The advent of electronic gadgets and technological innovations have made us dependent on these new devices for our business, academic and personal routines," said Rolando G. Peña, Network Services Division Head. "Whether these gadgets really make life more convenient and secure is the challenge we posed to all the participants to this year's SWEEP Awards."

Quiz Show

During the two-day affair, students from participating schools will also get the chance to go head-to-head against their peers in a TV quiz show-type game, PalaECEpan, now on its third year. To further liven things up, there will be thrilling musical performances from Chris Cayzer, Kitchie Nadal and other musical artists.

Job Fair

For those on the lookout for job opportunities, a mini job fair will feature partners from the PLDT Group of Companies, among them: SMART Communications, PLDT, PLDT Global, e-PLDT, Ventus, i-Plus and SPI Technology.

The third SWEEP Innovation & Excellence Awards is sponsored by Ericsson, Sysnet Integrators, Alcatel Lucent, Nokia Networks, Manila Bulletin, Cebu Pacific, Bayview Park Hotel, Infocom, Microdata, SMART Buddy, SMART Bro, SMART Click, PLDT Payphone, SMART Money, SMART Entrepreneurship Program, PLDT, PLDT WeRoam, Netopia, Level-Up, Smart Schools and Wolfpac.

Industry/Academe Partnership

SWEEP is a first-of-its-kind industry-academe collaboration, designed to help raise the level of education in ECE, as well as complement the existing ECE program of partner schools through in-depth training and insightful lectures on the latest developments in wireless technologies.

Since its launch in 2003, SWEEP has successfully outfitted ECE students with skills to help them fare better in the telecommunications industry, which is getting more and more competitive over the years.

To date, SWEEP has partnered with eight universities and one training institution in Metro Manila, 10 universities in Northern Luzon, four universities in Southern Luzon, 10 schools in the Visayas and eight schools in Mindanao.

For more information, you may visit www.smartsweep.ph

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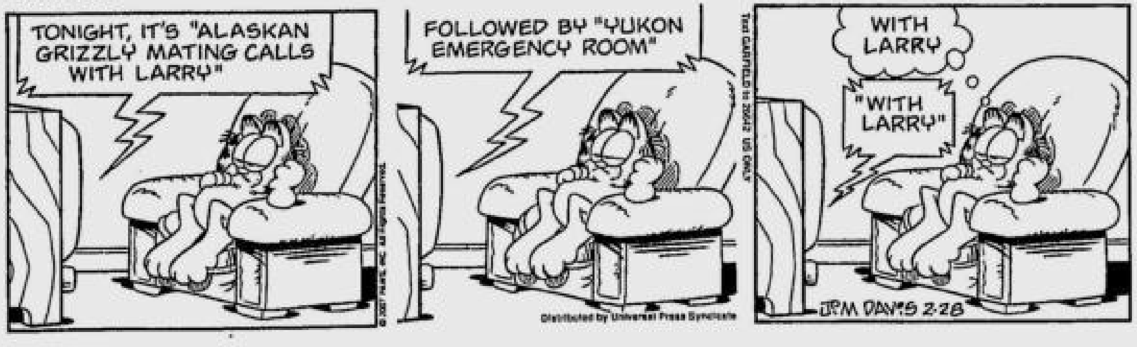
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2007

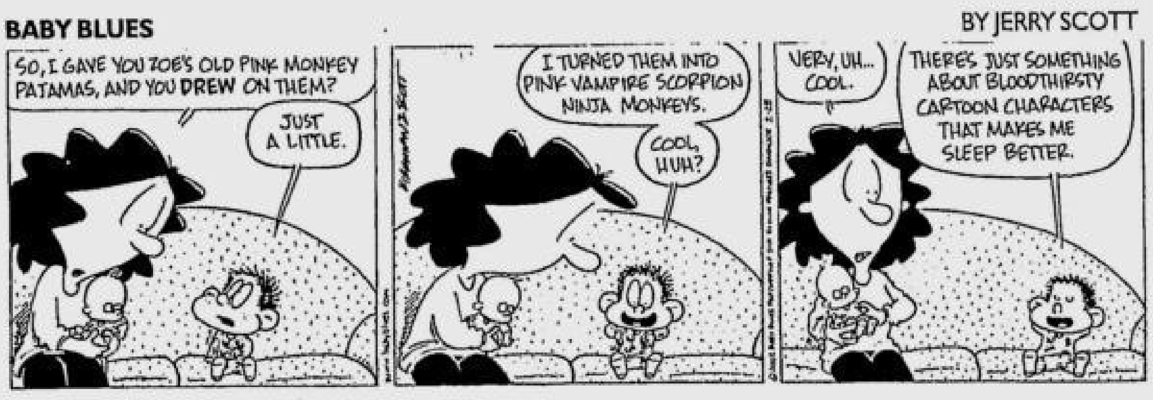
GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS


TONIGHT, IT'S "ALASKAN GRIZZLY MATING CALLS WITH LARRY"
FOLLOWED BY "YUKON EMERGENCY ROOM"
WITH LARRY
"WITH LARRY"
JIM DAVIS 2-28
Distributed by Universal Press Syndicate

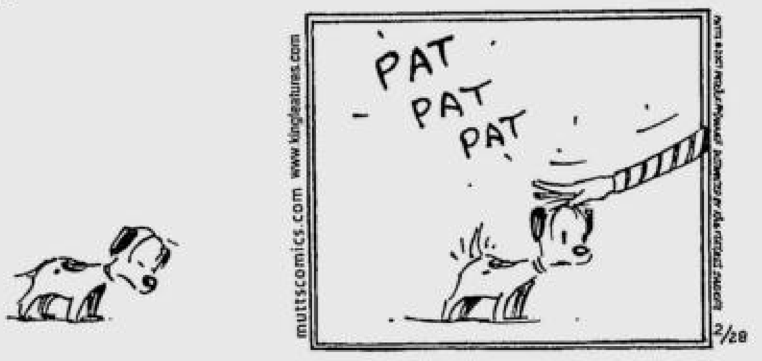
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


SO, I GAVE YOU ZOE'S OLD PINK MONKEY PAJAMAS, AND YOU DREW ON THEM?
JUST A LITTLE.
I TURNED THEM INTO PINK VAMPIRE SCORPION NINJA MONKEYS.
COOL, HUH?
VERY, UH... COOL.
THERE'S JUST SOMETHING ABOUT BLOODTHIRSTY CARTOON CHARACTERS THAT MAKES ME SLEEP BETTER.

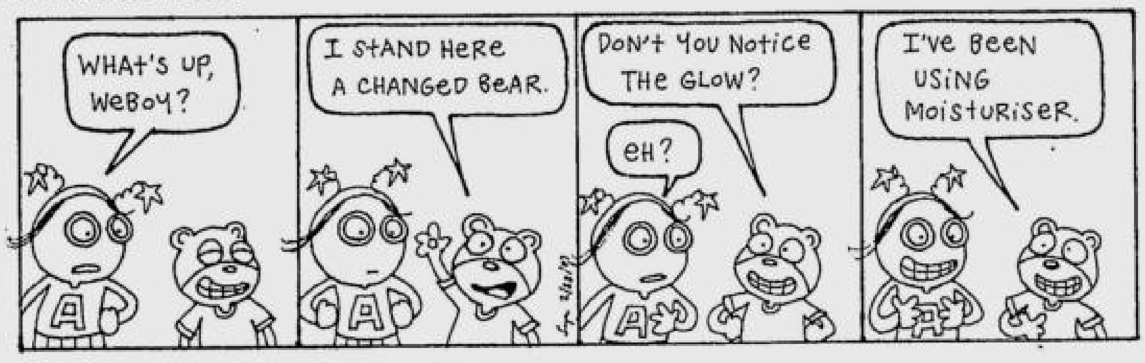
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


PAT PAT PAT
I NEEDED THAT.
muttscomics.com www.kingfeatures.com
2/28

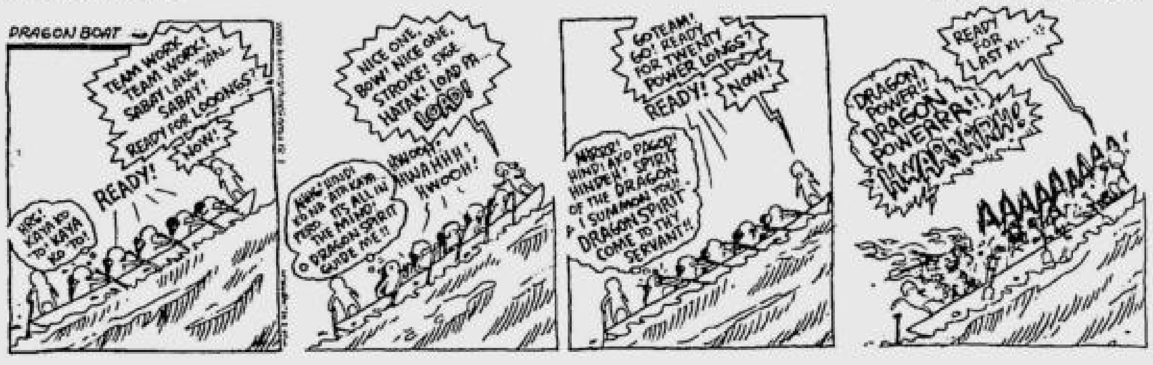
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


WHAT'S UP, WEBOY?
I STAND HERE A CHANGED BEAR.
DON'T YOU NOTICE THE GLOW?
EH?
I'VE BEEN USING MOISTURISER.

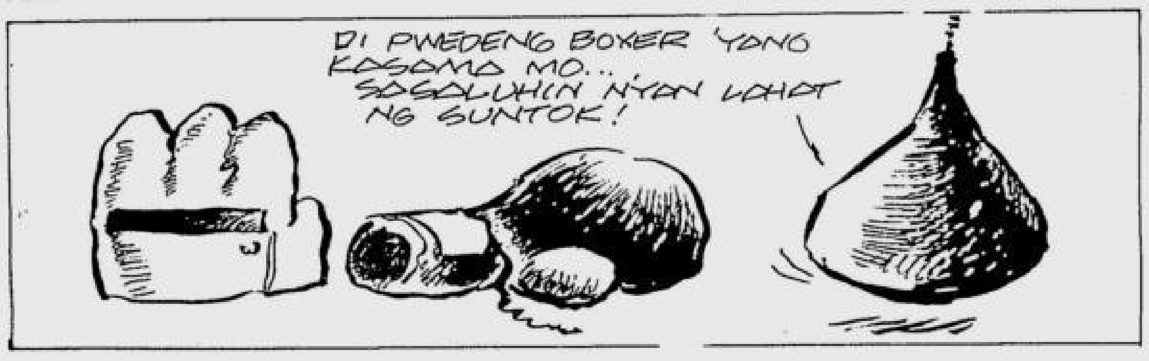
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


DRAGON BOAT
TEAM WORK! TEAM WORK! SABAY LANG 'YAN... SABAY! READY FOR LOOONGS?
NOW!
READY!
KAYA KO TO! KAYA KO TO!
NICE ONE. BOW! NICE ONE. STROKE! SIGE HATAK! LOAD PA... LOAD!
HWOOH! HWAHHH! HWOOH!
ITS ALL IN THE MIND! DRAGON SPIRIT GUIDE ME!!
GO TEAM! GO! READY FOR TWENTY POWER LONGS? READY! NOW!
DRAGON SPIRIT COME TO THY SERVANT!!
READY FOR LAST KI...!!
DRAGON POWER!! DRAGON POWERRR!!
AAAAAAAA!

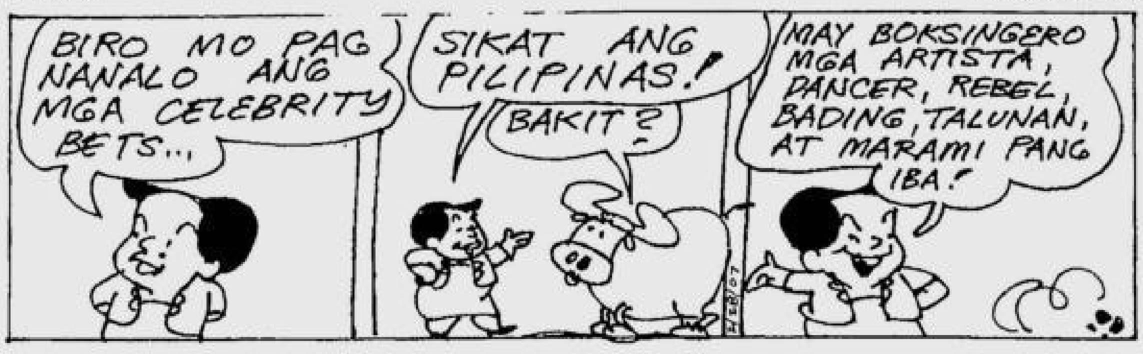
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


DI PWEDENG BOXER YONG KASAMA MO... SASALUHIN NYAN LAHAT NG SUNTOK!

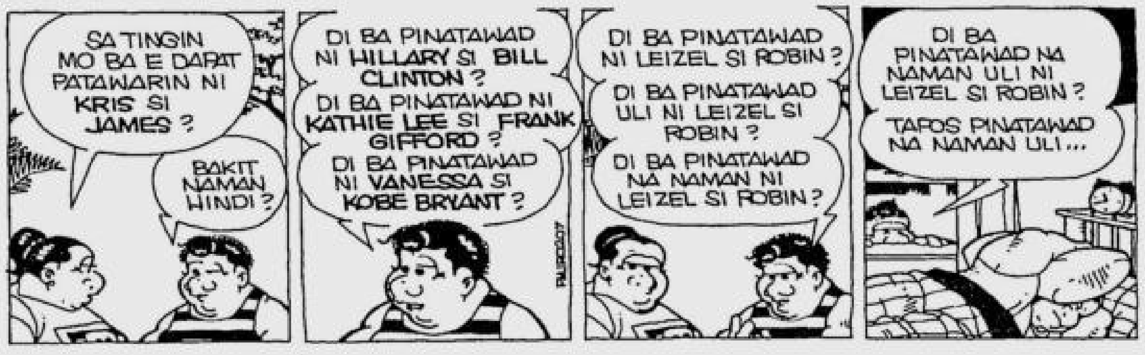
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


BIRO MO PAG NANALO ANG MGA CELEBRITY BETS...,
SIKAT ANG PILIPINAS!
BAKIT?
MAY BOKSINGERO MGA ARTISTA, DANCER, REBEL, BADING, TALUNAN, AT MARAMI PANG IBA!

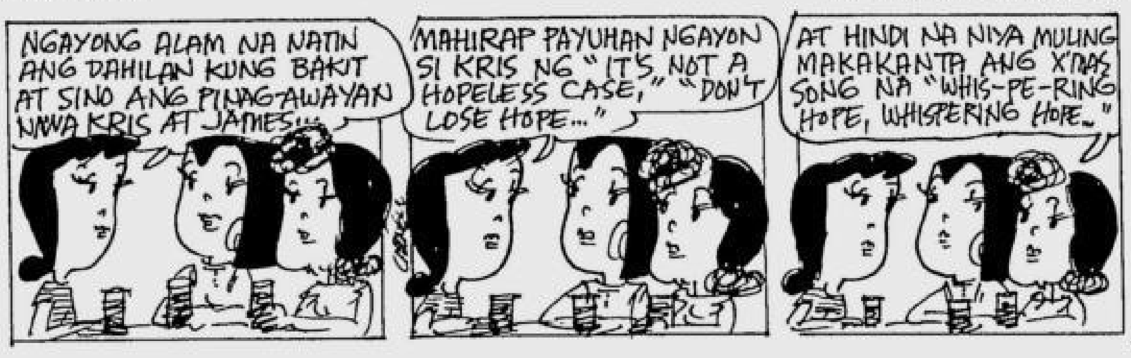
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


SA TINGIN MO BA E DAPAT PATAWARIN NI KRIS SI JAMES?
BAKIT NAMAN HINDI?
DI BA PINATAWAD NI HILLARY SI BILL CLINTON?
DI BA PINATAWAD NI KATHIE LEE SI FRANK GIFFORD?
DI BA PINATAWAD NI VANESSA SI KOBE BRYANT?
DI BA PINATAWAD NI LEIZEL SI ROBIN?
DI BA PINATAWAD ULI NI LEIZEL SI ROBIN?
DI BA PINATAWAD NA NAMAN NI LEIZEL SI ROBIN?
DI BA PINATAWAD NA NAMAN ULI NI LEIZEL SI ROBIN?
TAPOS PINATAWAD NA NAMAN ULI...

LOVEKNOTS

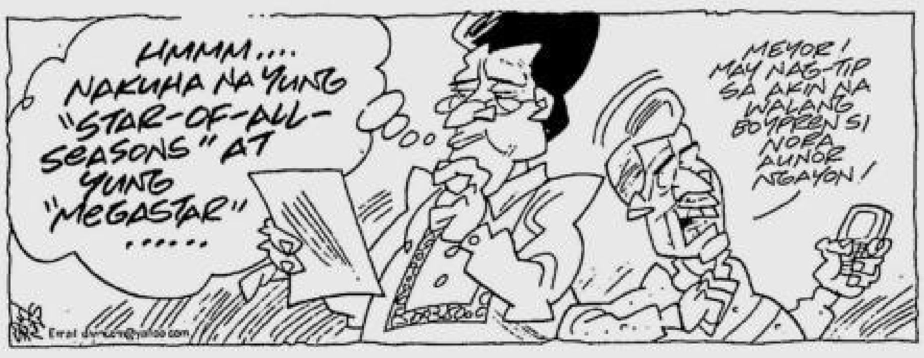
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


NGAYONG ALAM NA NATIN ANG DAHILAN KUNG BAKIT AT SINO ANG PINAG-AWAYAN NINA KRIS AT JAMES...
MAHIRAP PAYUHAN NGAYON SI KRIS NG "IT'S NOT A HOPELESS CASE," "DON'T LOSE HOPE..."
AT HINDI NA NIYA MULING MAKAKANTA ANG X'MAS SONG NA "WHIS-PE-RING HOPE, WHISPERING HOPE.."

DIVINE COMEDY

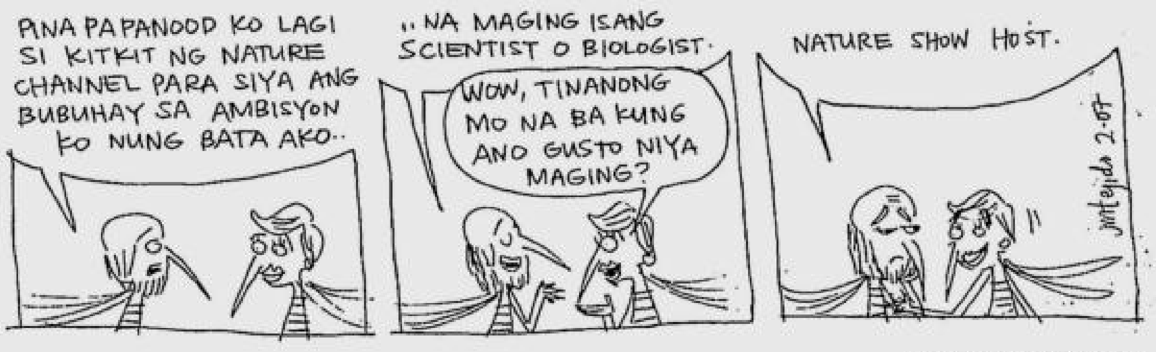
BY STEVEN PABALINAS

ANG WAIS NA KANDIDATO AY MARUNONG PUMILI NG ASAWA


HMMM.... NAKUHA NA YUNG "STAR-OF-ALL-SEASONS" AT YUNG "MEGASTAR" ......
MEYOR! MAY NAG-TIP SA AKIN NA WALANG BOYFREN SI NORA AUNOR NGAYON!

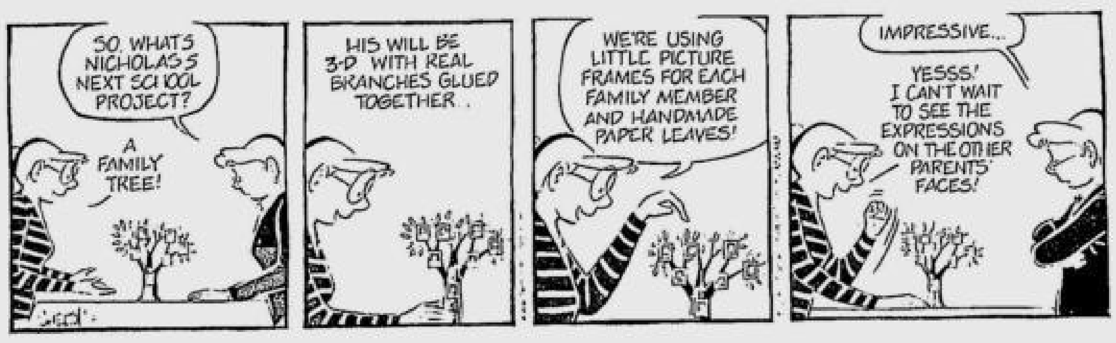
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

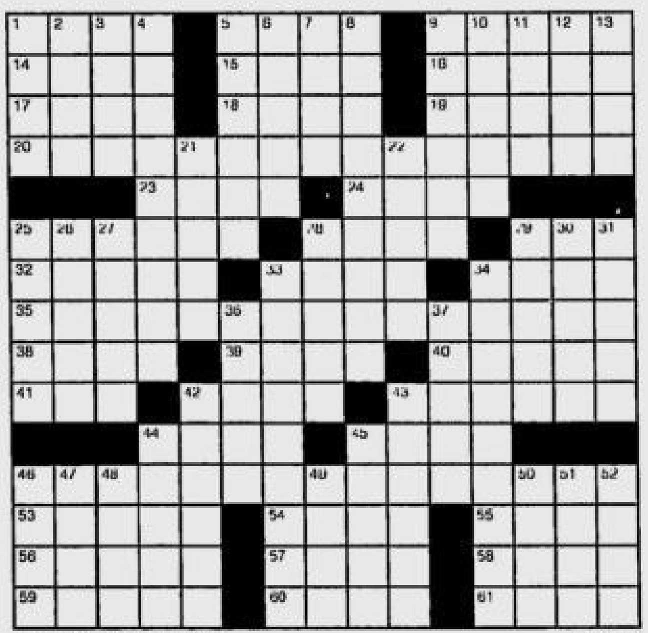

PINAPAPANOOD KO LAGI SI KITKIT NG NATURE CHANNEL PARA SIYA ANG BUBUHAY SA AMBISYON KO NUNG BATA AKO..
.. NA MAGING ISANG SCIENTIST O BIOLOGIST.
WOW, TINANONG MO NA BA KUNG ANO GUSTO NIYA MAGING?
NATURE SHOW HOST.
jmtejido 2-07

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


SO, WHAT'S NICHOLAS'S NEXT SCHOOL PROJECT?
A FAMILY TREE!
HIS WILL BE 3-D WITH REAL BRANCHES GLUED TOGETHER.
WE'RE USING LITTLE PICTURE FRAMES FOR EACH FAMILY MEMBER AND HANDMADE PAPER LEAVES!
IMPRESSIVE...
YESSS! I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE THE EXPRESSIONS ON THE OTHER PARENTS' FACES!

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR

2/28/07

ACROSS
1 Squalid urban area
5 Neighbor of Sudan
9 Jobs for Sherlock
14 Misplace
15 Put on cargo
16 Eccentric
17 Toward the mouth
18 Potpourri
19 Actor Williams
20 How to get going?
23 God of war
24 Platte River tribe
25 Complimentary
28 Mom's mom
29 Reunion grp.
32 Home-run king
33 Distinctive style
34 Programmer's instruction
35 How to proceed?
38 Superman's sweetie
39 Cozy abode
40 Mocking reproach
41 Wind dir.
42 Medics
43 Cook's herbs
44 Track tipster
45 Opera song
46 How to succeed?
53 Bout segment
54 Holds up
55 __ Stanley Gardner
56 Former name of Hagatna, Guam
57 Help a crook
58 Alda or Ladd
59 Chopped finely
60 Not as much
61 E-mailed

DOWN
1 Untidy person
2 Colorful parrot
3 Amer. service branch
4 Those who settle disputes
5 Seals the deal
6 Legendary football coach
7 Tennis score, for short
8 Grooming product
9 Preacher Mather
10 Mystiques
11 Lob or mob finale
12 QED word
13 Fixes in position
21 Singer Lopez
22 Endure
25 "It Happened One Night" star
26 Synthetic fabric
27 Clarinetist Shaw
28 See-through material
29 Public debate
30 Make right
31 Sahl and Drucker
33 College of presidents?
34 Disputed territories
36 Actress Aimee
37 Value system
42 Thingamabob
43 Lovers' meetings
44 Weight unit for lorries
45 French clerics
46 Small nail
47 Bear or Berra
48 Anti-Red grp.
49 Dressing gown
50 Heraldic band
51 Pearl Buck heroine
52 English county

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

C	A	N	A	L	■	S	T	L	O	■	A	T	T	Y
A	W	A	R	E	■	P	A	S	S	■	T	R	U	E
M	A	K	E	T	H	E	N	U	S	■	L	A	N	A
E	K	E	■	S	I	C	K	■	U	S	A	G	E	S
L	E	D	O	F	F	■	■	S	A	Y	S	I	■	■
■	■	■	J	A	I	L	B	I	R	D	■	C	S	A
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2/28/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have a vibrant personality. You attack life with vigor and enthusiasm. If you're interested in something, you take it to the limit. Privately, you're emotionally complex. (This is where few know you very well.) However, your positive energy will always attract good fortune to you. An important choice awaits you this year. Choose wisely.
Birthdate of: Eric Lindros, hockey player; Bernadette Peters, actress/singer; Linus Pauling, Nobel Prize winner.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Romance might be disappointing today. Don't let this get you down. These feelings will pass soon. Parents should also go easy on themselves. (Hey—you have the toughest job in the world.)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Family situations might disappoint you now. Do not blame yourself. No one is perfect. (Actually, I once met three perfect people, and I didn't like any of them.)

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You might be worried because you feel you've let others down; worse yet, you've even let yourself down. This is just the stars. Relax.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You might be worried about money and making ends meet today. (Money doesn't grow on trees—you've got to beat the bushes for it.)

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Partners or close friends could disappoint you today. Don't get hung up on this. Instead, focus on what is positive. (This feeling will pass.)

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Today you feel restless and perhaps a little dissatisfied or unhappy with yourself. The truth is, a lot of people feel that way today. Find a friend and share some laughs.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You might feel inadequate as a lover, a parent or a creative person today. Actually, today a lot of people feel like a chump. That's because idealism and reality are staring each other in the eye.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): This is a poor day to talk to parents, bosses and VIPs. Somehow, you'll come away feeling diminished or inadequate. Just avoid this scene if you can.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You might be disillusioned with politics or religion today. Something you hoped for seems to be shot down. This is just one of those days when your glass is half-empty. (It's all perception.)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): This is a bad day for money deals, because you might find it difficult to stand up for yourself. You're hesitant and too cautious.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Close relationships seem to disappoint you today. Relax. Give this little thought. People's ideals are attainable right now. (It's a weird day.)

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): It's easy to feel disillusioned today. Whatever you hoped for seems to be impossible to achieve. Don't let this get you down. Things will look much better in a few days.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

by Dave Green

8				6				
2	9	1	7	3			4	
7				1				3
1				9				2
	7	2	4		6	8		1
		3					9	
		7						4
		9						5
	4	8	2	7	3	1	6	9

Difficulty Level ★★★

2/28

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

5	8	4	9	1	3	6	2	7
6	9	7	2	8	5	1	4	3
2	3	1	7	6	4	5	8	9
9	2	5	4	7	6	3	1	8
8	4	6	1	3	2	7	9	5
1	7	3	5	9	8	4	6	2
4	6	8	3	5	9	2	7	1
7	5	2	8	4	1	9	3	6
3	1	9	6	2	7	8	5	4

Difficulty Level ★★

DEFY length traditions with this beautiful dress by Kat Sy.

DARK DIVA. Dress by Ebony & Ivory

Hello, gorgeous

From page D1

runways, short dresses visually elongate the legs, making the wearer look taller and the legs slimmer. Since people—girls and boys—have a natural fondness for legs, the cocktail dress works well with practically anybody.

"The great thing about cocktail dresses is that they can adapt to any affair. So long as you keep your accessories minimal, you would not look underdressed or overdressed," says Sy.

Sy's latest collection of gorgeous grad ball cocktail dresses fit the bill perfectly. Her dresses are flexible, allowing any girl to jump from one event to another without looking as though she'd gone back home just to change outfits.

"Wear a fitted bolero or a shrug and you're off to a fun nightout with girlfriends or a romantic dinner with your boyfriend. Dressing should be that simple. It doesn't take much time to look good," she says.

With designer outfits becoming more expensive these days, Sy-Kat Couture offers a more budget-friendly alternative to those who find bespoke items a little expensive. Its ready-to-wear collection exudes modern and chic elegance.

"Looking good doesn't need to be expensive. Wise fashionistas are practical. They want dresses that can be worn again on another event," Kay Sy says.

Sy-Kat Couture is at GF Doña Consolacion Building, 122 Jupiter St, Makati. Aside from off-the-rack items, it also offers made-to-order services. Call 8904280.

PHOTOS BY JEFFREY SONORA
STYLING BY KAT
SY AND THONS EDANO
MAKEUP BY CLAIRE
SEELIN-DIOKNO OF SHU
UEMURA USING PARADOX
HAIR BY RICKY DIOKNO
FOR KEIHL'S STYLIST SERIES
MODEL
MIKAELA LAGDAMEO
MARTINEZ OF ELAN
LUCIA OF CHAMELEON
MODELS

NO TO SKIRTS. Skip the skirt and stand out. Outfit by Sy

Plus-size . . .

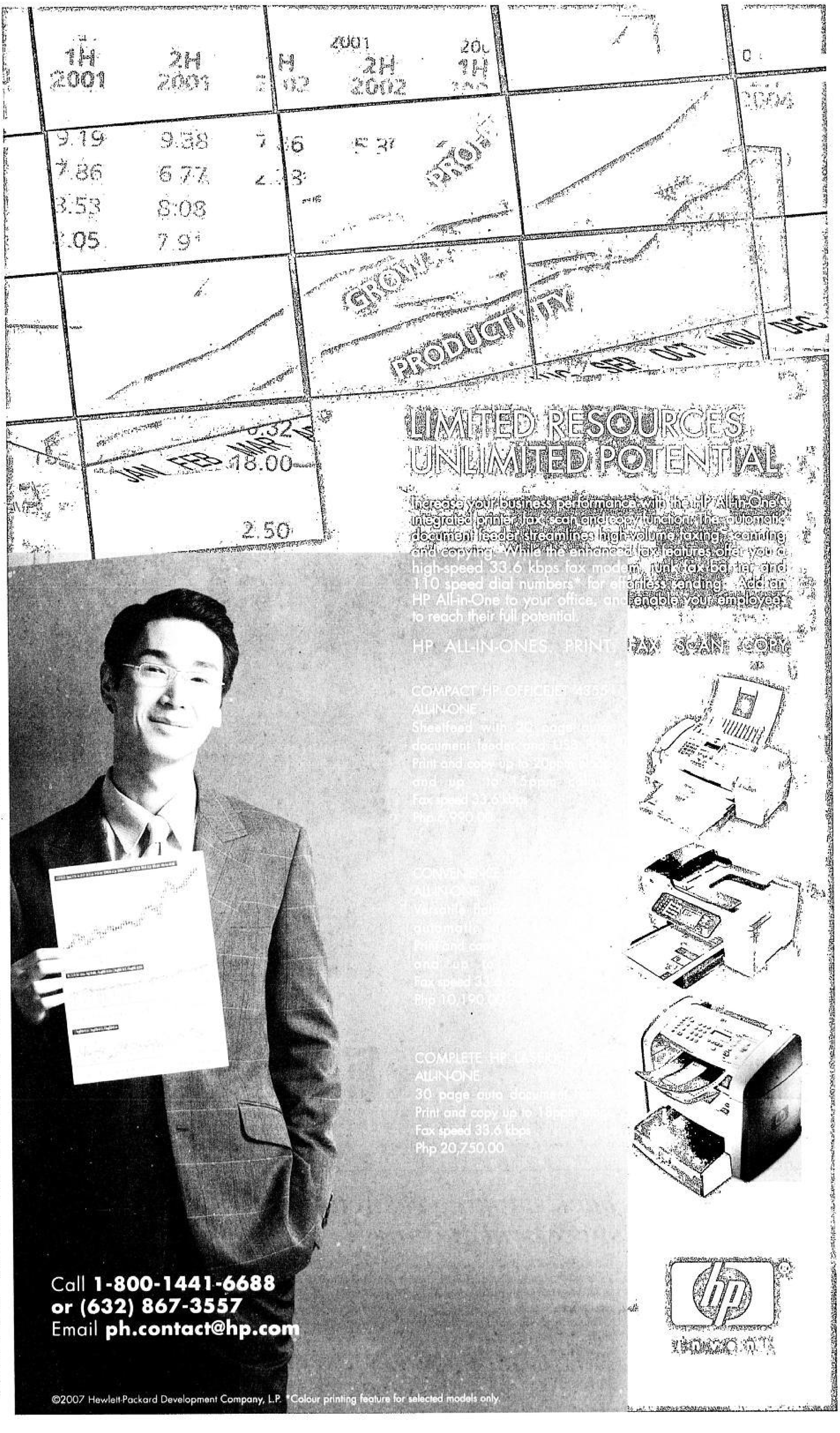
From page D4

Once, I watched "Oprah" and it featured an obese woman who said that what was hereditary in their family was not obesity but depression. Due to depression, she yielded to food for release and comfort.

It was the same thing with me. It was not easy, and until now it is not easy. I am a mentor to a lot of young women and it is not easy to discuss with them what I had gone through. But I continue to do so to let them know that physical appearances should not be altered just to please people around us. Sometimes there is a deeper meaning in our physical image, and these become manifestations of what we are going through. Solving physical 'differences' is not as easy as healing what is inside.

And every fat child should know that it is okay to speak up for one's self when it is proper. It is not easy being the fat kid, but we grow up in the process and we find people who will inspire us along the way, such that we end up inspiring others, too.

The 2bU! Self-Esteem Chronicles is published in partnership with Dove. Dove broadens the standards of beauty and improves self-esteem in order to inspire more women to care for themselves. Make a contribution to the Dove Self-Esteem Fund by purchasing Dove products. Proceeds from the fund are used to run BodyTalk, a self-esteem workshop to help young girls develop a positive self-image.



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Plus-size wallflower

When you're fat, you aren't pretty. There is no such thing as a fat Barbie.

By Deewai Mabunga Rodriguez

AS A LITTLE GIRL, I was never asked to be a flower girl in any single wedding in our clan. I never had the chance to wear those ruffled, silky, pinkish floral dresses.

This was very hard for me to accept since my older sister was a flower girl in several weddings. At a young age, I was more of a wallflower rather than the cute flower girl who would march down the aisle with soft rose petals in her palms.

My mom would comfort me by saying that as a young kid I was just too temperamental, and inviting me to solemn events like weddings might cause problems. And, yes, I was a temperamental kid. In kindergarten, I was given a single table so that I would not have to share with fellow classmates.

I wanted to be alone. I did not want people to talk to me or look at me. Hence it was not surprising that I found comfort in food. My mom is a great cook, so she would prepare these wonderful dishes. She was also very giving and compromising; she would buy me the more popular food (I refuse to call them junk) that I wanted to eat.

Looking back, I do not think she was being irresponsible. Maybe she just did not know how to deal with me and by giving me the food that I wanted, it made dealing with her bratty daughter less burdensome.

Thus, I became fat. Food was the source of comfort and, sometimes, imaginary friendship. However, as I grew older, I started to realize that being fat made you the laughing stock. You become the butt of jokes among smelly schoolboys. And when you're fat, you aren't pretty. There is no such thing as a fat Barbie, after all.

I used to blame my fat mom and dad for my weight. Family reunions served as validations that, indeed, our families strongly hold the 'fat gene.' I struggled with my hefty weight, but in time, instead of focusing on my weight, I studied harder and I read more. I looked up to my older brother and sister who were also fat but excelled in school.

Gradually, I found my place under the sun in campus leadership activities. I became a student leader and debater. Although a lot of projects and programs kept me busy, I would not deny that being overweight sometimes distracted me from my goals. I would cry and cry some more, but I never really underestimated myself. Focusing on other peoples' concerns as a youth leader gave me a deeper perspective in life which made me realize that worrying about my extra pounds was a mockery of the other individuals who were having more significant concerns in life.

Because of this, I became more mature and, at the same time, I tried to know myself more. I wanted to understand why I'd become depressed now and then. I wanted to know why as a child I was unhappy. I also wanted an explanation why I felt empty although I had become socially involved, more family-oriented and spiritually active.

Months later, I was invited to serve as a speaker in a young women's leadership training in one of the far provinces in our region. I prepared to give a speech on leadership and good governance. However, as I proceeded to the workshop and the open forum, it slowly came to my attention that most of the participants were victims of sexual abuse or who had loved ones who became victims.

For the first time, I came face to face with the childhood memories that I managed to hide. I was sexually harassed as a child. It was a tough call, but I faced my "monster" by sharing it with the participants. I wanted to tell them that they were not alone and that nothing should hinder us from aspiring and fighting for our dreams.

PLUS-SIZE/ D3

th [illegible]
self-esteem

Be a part of 2bU! and Dove's Self-Esteem Chronicles

DOVE RECENTLY LAUNCHED the Self-Esteem Fund, which will be used to run BodyTalk Workshops for young girls. In this connection, 2bU! wants to read your self-esteem story.

Share your story. Use the following questions as a guide.

Tell us about your childhood beauty insecurity. How did it develop? Did it make an impact on your self-confidence, your ability to reach your goals and maximize your potential? How did caring for yourself help you overcome your hang-ups? Do you have tips for building a positive self-image?

INQUIRER 2bU! and Dove will be running the Self-Esteem Chronicles for the next eight weeks, until March 14. One story will be chosen each week. Deadline of entries is every Saturday. Essays must be a maximum of 4,000 characters.

If your story is selected, it will be published in 2bU! and you will receive Dove gift packs and a limited-edition Dove Statement Tee designed by Kate Torralba.

Don't forget to choose which shirt statement you want ["A dark child can brighten your day"; "A chubby kid can live large"; "A short child can stand tall"; "100% real beauty"; and which size you will need: "I'm petite and a big dreamer" (bust: 26-28 inches); "I'm somewhere in between, but just as sweet" (29-32 inches); "I'm big and beautiful" (33-36 inches)].

E-mail your entries to selfesteemchronicles@gmail.com along with your name, age, contact info, school/office.

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Doctors back smoking reduction to successful quitting

Doctors agree that smoking is such a hard habit to break, as tobacco dependence is both physical and psychological. They know that going "cold turkey" may not work for all smokers since it involves strong will and determination. One alternative to this is smoking reduction which may be suitable for smokers who cannot stop abruptly but whose ultimate goal is to eventually beat the habit.

Smoking reduction can be defined as a sustained decrease in cigarette consumption in smokers who are unable or not ready to quit abruptly.

Dr. Lenora Fernandez, Clinical Associate at the UP College of Medicine, Philippine General Hospital, sees the benefit in cutting down on cigarette intake as a way of completely dropping smoking. "Clinical studies have shown that cutting down stimulates interest in smoking cessation. The good thing about this method is that the smoker, soon to be successful quitter, goes through the process with control and at his own pace."

Just within 20 minutes of dropping the cigarette stick, healing takes place within the smoker's body. "Studies have shown that cutting down by 50% will increase the chances of success, which can be done within 6 weeks," added Fernandez.

Cutting down on cigarette smoking, when supplemented by Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT), presents more promise. NRT is the use of various forms of nicotine delivery methods intended to replace nicotine obtained from smoking or other tobacco products.

Nicorette (nicotine) gum, a form of NRT, doubles the chances of successfully quitting smoking by providing the body with the nicotine it craves without all the harmful chemicals found in a cigarette such as tar and carbon monoxide. Nicorette gum has been clinically proven safe and effective to use. The World Health Organization advocates the use of NRT products, such as the Nicorette gum, as a valuable tool in the fight against cigarette smoking, and supports its use by smokers who wish to beat the habit.

Nicorette can be used by smokers who want to quit immediately or those who would want to reduce their cigarette consumption on the way to completely quitting for good.

Nicorette can be purchased without prescription in all Mercury Drugstores nationwide. For more information on Nicorette, you can log on to www.nicorette.com.ph.

ADVT.

Website: www.inquirer.net/entertainment

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

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Job well done

Oscar rites dull in parts but, like its new host, relaxed and pleasant

REVIEW

NEW YORK—OSCAR host Ellen DeGeneres can probably put anyone at ease. Even nominees for the biggest awards in show business.

"It's my job to relax you," the daytime talk show host told them during her Oscarcast monologue. "To put your mind at ease and make you forget that this is a make-or-break night for you. I cannot imagine what you people are going through!" She smiled an even brighter smile.

Teasing but unassuming, DeGeneres is always pleasant company, as she was Sunday night hosting "The 79th Annual Academy Awards" on ABC. Like her, the evening was easy-going, comfortable and reliably unsurprising.

That is, when it was not dull.

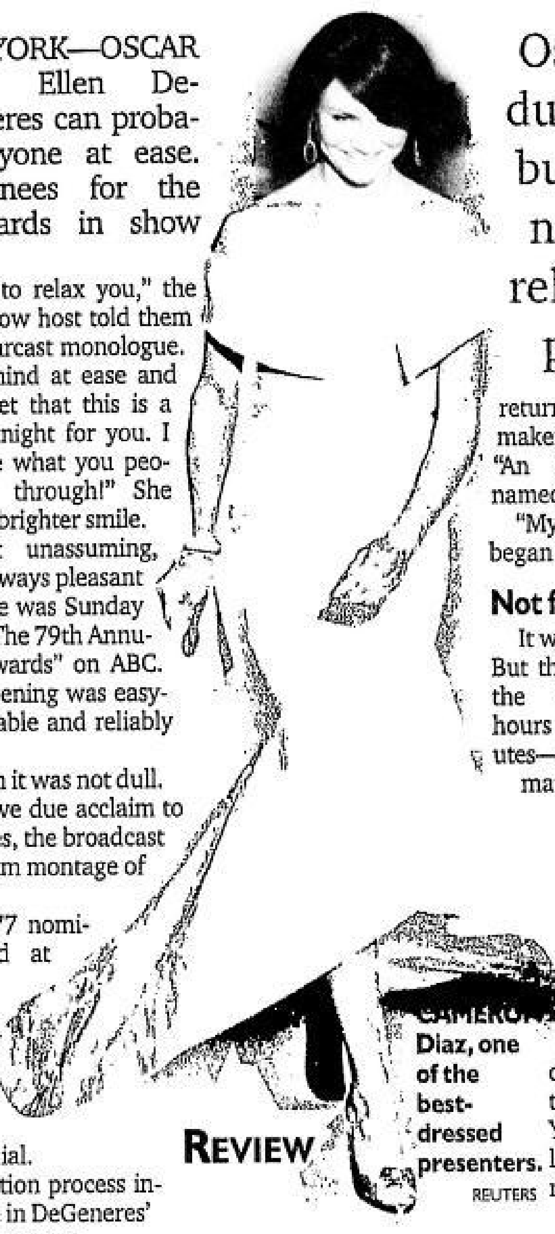
Aiming to give due acclaim to all the nominees, the broadcast began with a film montage of the hopefuls.

Then the 177 nominees on hand at Hollywood's Kodak Theatre stood for applause from the rest of the house.

All very cordial.

The nomination process inspired one joke in DeGeneres' monologue that was good for a hearty laugh.

She observed, "There's no rhyme or reason to who's gonna win," then went on to point out that Jennifer Hudson was voted off "American Idol" by viewers, "and yet she's here with an Oscar nomination."



CAMERON Diaz, one of the best-dressed presenters. REUTERS

Orchestrated

Then DeGeneres turned to another nominee, Al Gore. "America did vote for him, and—" She flashed a bemused look while the audience roared with laughter and applauded. "Very complicated!"

Later, on stage, Gore thanked "all the talented people ... who've been part of the mission to inspire a successful response to the climate crisis," which was the focus of his film "An Inconvenient Truth."

Then, apparently warming to sidekick Leonardo DiCaprio's invitation to make "a major, major announcement," the former US vice president produced a sheet of paper and seemed to be about to declare his candidacy for the 2008 presidential race—but was cut short by a swell of music. He was being played offstage by the orchestra.

He made another return trip to the stage with filmmaker Davis Guggenheim when "An Inconvenient Truth" was named Best Documentary.

"My fellow Americans," Gore began again, then stopped himself.

Not funny

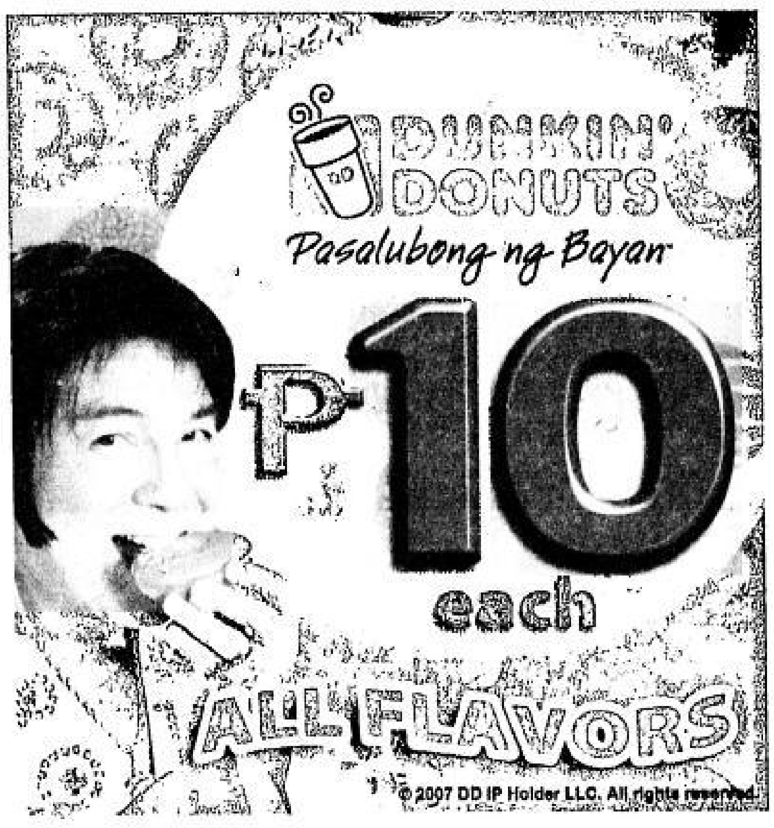
It was all a joke, of course. But the leisurely pace of the broadcast—three hours and 50 minutes—was no laughing matter.

Film favorites Will Ferrell, Jack Black and John C. Reilly did a funny song-and-dance number lamenting that, as Ferrell crooned, "a comedian at the Oscars is the saddest man of all: Your movies may make millions, but your name they'll never call."

JOB/E6

STEVEN Spielberg takes Ellen's picture with Clint Eastwood as Beyonce looks on. REUTERS

ELLEN suggests winners put Oscar in a baby sling while they party. REUTERS



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NO ROOM FOR SOFTNESS!
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300
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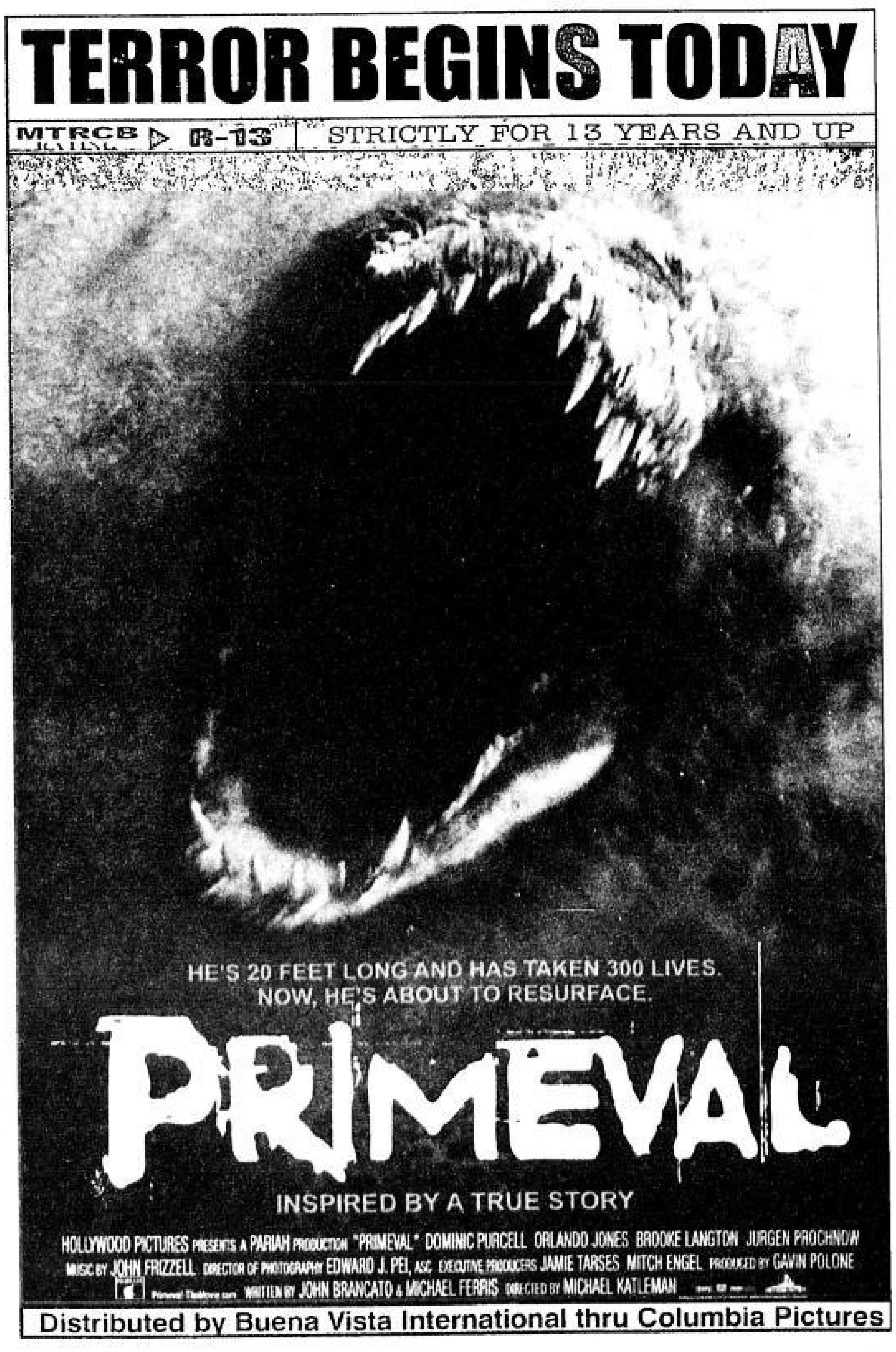

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1 PRIMEVAL
2 CATCH AND RELEASE
3 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
4 FLUSHED AWAY
5 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
6 THE PROMISE/ EPIC MOVIE

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YOU GOT ME

CENTERSTAGE
GHOST RIDER

THE PODIUM

CINEMA 1
IT'S A BOY GIRL THING

CINEMA 2
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SM NORTH EDSA 929-5452
1 FLUSHED AWAY
2 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
3 MUSIC AND LYRICS
4 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
5 THE PROMISE
6 PRIMEVAL
7 GHOST RIDER
8 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
9 EPIC MOVIE
10 NUMBER 23
11 YOU GOT ME
12 YOU GOT ME

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
1 PRIMEVAL
2 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
3 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
4 GHOST RIDER
5 EPIC MOVIE
6 FLUSHED AWAY
7 THE MESSENGERS
8 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
9 THE PROMISE
10 YOU GOT ME
11 MUSIC AND LYRICS
12 NUMBER 23

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
1 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
2 YOU GOT ME
3 MUSIC AND LYRICS
4 GHOST RIDER
5 EPIC MOVIE
6 PRIMEVAL
7 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
8 YOU GOT ME
9 THE PROMISE
10 THE MESSENGERS
11 NUMBER 23
12 FLUSHED AWAY

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 YOU GOT ME
2 GHOST RIDER
3 PRIMEVAL
4 FLUSHED AWAY
5 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
6 EPIC MOVIE
7 NUMBER 23
8 THE PROMISE
9 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
10 MUSIC AND LYRICS

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
1 GHOST RIDER
2 PRIMEVAL
3 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
4 FLUSHED AWAY
5 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
6 YOU GOT ME

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888
1 YOU GOT ME
2 PRIMEVAL
3 GHOST RIDER
4 FLUSHED AWAY
5 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
6 EPIC MOVIE
7 NUMBER 23
8 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
9 THE PROMISE

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 PRIMEVAL
2 YOU GOT ME
3 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
4 GHOST RIDER

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
1 PRIMEVAL
2 EPIC MOVIE
3 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
4 THE HOLIDAY
5 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
6 GHOST RIDER
7 FLUSHED AWAY
8 MUSIC AND LYRICS
9 YOU GOT ME
10 THE MESSENGERS
11 NUMBER 23
12 THE PROMISE

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4333201-04
1 PRIMEVAL
2 YOU GOT ME
3 MUSIC AND LYRICS
4 GHOST RIDER

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917
1 PRIMEVAL
2 GHOST RIDER
3 YOU GOT ME
4 YOU GOT ME

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975
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2 PRIMEVAL
3 YOU GOT ME
4 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING

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2 THE PROMISE
3 GHOST RIDER
4 PRIMEVAL
5 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
6 YOU GOT ME
7 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
8 FLUSHED AWAY

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45
1 PRIMEVAL
2 GHOST RIDER
3 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
4 THE PROMISE
5 YOU GOT ME
6 YOU GOT ME

SM CITY MARILAO (044)9332013-17
1 PRIMEVAL
2 YOU GOT ME
3 THE PROMISE
4 GHOST RIDER

LUZON

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04
1 BABEL
2 YOU GOT ME
3 GHOST RIDER
4 THE HOLIDAY

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)9637681-85
1 GHOST RIDER
2 PRIMEVAL
3 THE PROMISE
4 TENACIOUS D
5 YOU GOT ME
6 YOU GOT ME

SM CIY LIPA (043) 756-7925
1 BABEL
2 GHOST RIDER
3 YOU GOT ME
4 THE CLEANER

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80
1 YOU GOT ME
2 GHOST RIDER
3 BABEL
4 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197838-39
1 YOU GOT ME
2 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
3 GHOST RIDER
4 PRIMEVALBLES

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-3160
1 YOU GOT ME
2 YOU GOT ME
3 THE FOUNTAIN
4 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5349811
1 GHOST RIDER
2 THE PROMISE
3 PRIMEVAL
4 YOU GOT ME

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876
1 THE FOUNTAIN
2 GHOST RIDER
3 PRIMEVAL
4 FLUSHED AWAY
5 MUSIC AND LYRICS
6 THE PROMISE
7 YOU GOT ME
8 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422
1 MUSIC AND LYRICS
2 RESERVED
3 PRIMEVAL
4 YOU GOT ME
5 GHOST RIDER
6 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
7 RESERVED
8 THE MESSENGERS

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998
1 PRIMEVAL
2 ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES
3 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
4 YOU GOT ME
5 THE CLEANER
6 GHOST RIDER

SM CITY CAGAYAN (088)859-2884
1 GHOST RIDE
2 YOU GOT ME
3 THE CLEANER
4 PRIMEVAL

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SHOWTIME
EVENT CALENDAR

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ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD CINEMAS MOVIE GUIDE

MOVIEWORLD

CINEMA ACCESS
635-5555
FOR ALL BRANCHES

www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

MOVIES/SCHEDULES/PRICES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

GALLERIA
Ticket Price THX: P161 131 Indie Sine: 101 632-9116

1 GHOST RIDER • THX
2 PRIMEVAL
3 indieSine: PEPOT ARTISTA
4 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
5 YOU GOT ME
6 FLUSHED AWAY
7 KABUL EXPRESS
8 EPIC MOVIE
9 THE NUMBER 23
10 BRIDGE of TERABITHIA

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YASH CHOPRA PRESENTS
KABUL EXPRESS

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February 28 to March 06
MTRCB Rating: PG13

ERMITA
Ticket Price: P110 536-7809 to 12

1 PRIMEVAL
2 THE NUMBER 23
BRIDGE of TERABITHIA
3 GHOST RIDER
4 indieSine: GHOST RIDER
5 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
6 YOU GOT ME
7 FLUSHED AWAY

METRO EAST
Ticket Price: P100 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 FLUSHED AWAY
2 PRIMEVAL
3 ITS A BOY GIRL THING
4 BRIDGE of TERABITHIA
5 EPIC MOVIE
6 GHOST RIDER
7 THE NUMBER 23
8 YOU GOT ME

NOVALICHES
Ticket Price: P91 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 PRIMEVAL
2 indieSine: ROME and JULIET
3 EPIC MOVIE
4 FLUSHED AWAY
5 YOU GOT ME
6 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING

PIONEER
Ticket Price: P102 687-5378

1 YOU GOT ME
2 PRIMEVAL
3 FLUSHED AWAY
4 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING

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1 YOU GOT ME
2 PRIMEVAL
3 TROIKA
4 THE CLEANER

LIPA
Ticket Price: P 90 (043) 757-3664 (043) 312-5870

1 GHOST RIDER
2 TROIKA
3 THE CLEANER
4 YOU GOT ME

DASMARIÑAS
Ticket Price: P75 / 80 (046) 416-4332

1 PRIMEVAL
2 MUSIC and LYRICS
3 YOU GOT ME
4 HANNIBAL RISING

ANGELES
Ticket Price: P 90 (045) 892-2348

1 PRIMEVAL
2 THE FOUNTAIN
3 TROIKA
4 YOU GOT ME

IMUS
Ticket Price: P100 (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188

1 YOU GOT ME
2 PRIMEVAL
3 GHOST RIDER
4 GHOST RIDER
5 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE
6 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING

STARMILLS
Ticket Price: P75 / 80 (045) 875-1927

1 PRIMEVAL
2 THE FOUNTAIN
3 TROIKA
4 YOU GOT ME
5 GHOST RIDER
6 THE PROMISE

BACOLOD
Ticket Price: P70 (034) 441-0459

1 PRIMEVAL
2 MUSIC and LYRICS
3 THE MESSENGERS
4 GHOST RIDER
5 YOU GOT ME
6 APOCALYPTO

ILOILO
Ticket Price: P60.50/67.50/70.50 (033) 336-8070

1 PRIMEVAL
2 MUSIC and LYRICS
3 TROIKA
4 GHOST RIDER
5 YOU GOT ME
6 APOCALYPTO

REVIEW

Spook show

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

THE MOVIE "GHOST Rider," about a rebellious, skull-faced servant of darkness, can be categorized alongside Marvel Comics' other lackluster film translations such as "Punisher," "Daredevil" and "Elektra."

Sadly, the motorcycle-riding vigilante is given a toned-down, unappealing treatment. It can also be likened to the movie version of Todd McFarlane's "Spawn," about 10 years back—another SFX-embellished movie about a person who gains powers from hell, and his struggle to reclaim his condemned soul.

Repackaged

This film version of "Ghost Rider," written and directed by Mark Steven Johnson ("Daredevil," "Elektra"), takes the core concept and repackages the character and its oft-convoluted history into something comprehensible to those unfamiliar with the source comic book. A young stunt cyclist, Johnny Blaze (Matt Long), is tricked into selling his soul by Mephistopheles (Peter Fonda), disguised as a blind human. In exchange, Blaze's terminally ill father Barton (Brett Cullen) gets cured. Johnny learns soon enough that the stranger is really from hell.

Johnny as an adult (Nicolas Cage) is a popular celebrity stunt performer, a jelly-bean-eating, cartoon-watching nice guy who secretly researches about his life-changing bargain. He exhibits supernatural powers, and must save his ex Roxanne (Eva Mendes) from Mephistopheles and his similarly menacing son Blackheart (Wes Bentley).

Cage and Long competently do their job, but they don't look alike at all!

Nothing new

There isn't anything new or spectacular in the movie. Sure, there's Ghost Rider's burning-skull effects and blazing motorcycle, but you don't care about the character for long. His powers and total look combine details of two Ghost Riders of different eras from the comics. That works some, but he doesn't have enough scenes to really cut loose in.

The love angle with Roxanne quickly gets dull, and the actress is

SPOOK/ E4

"GHOST RIDER"

MTRCB RATING R-13 | STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND ABOVE

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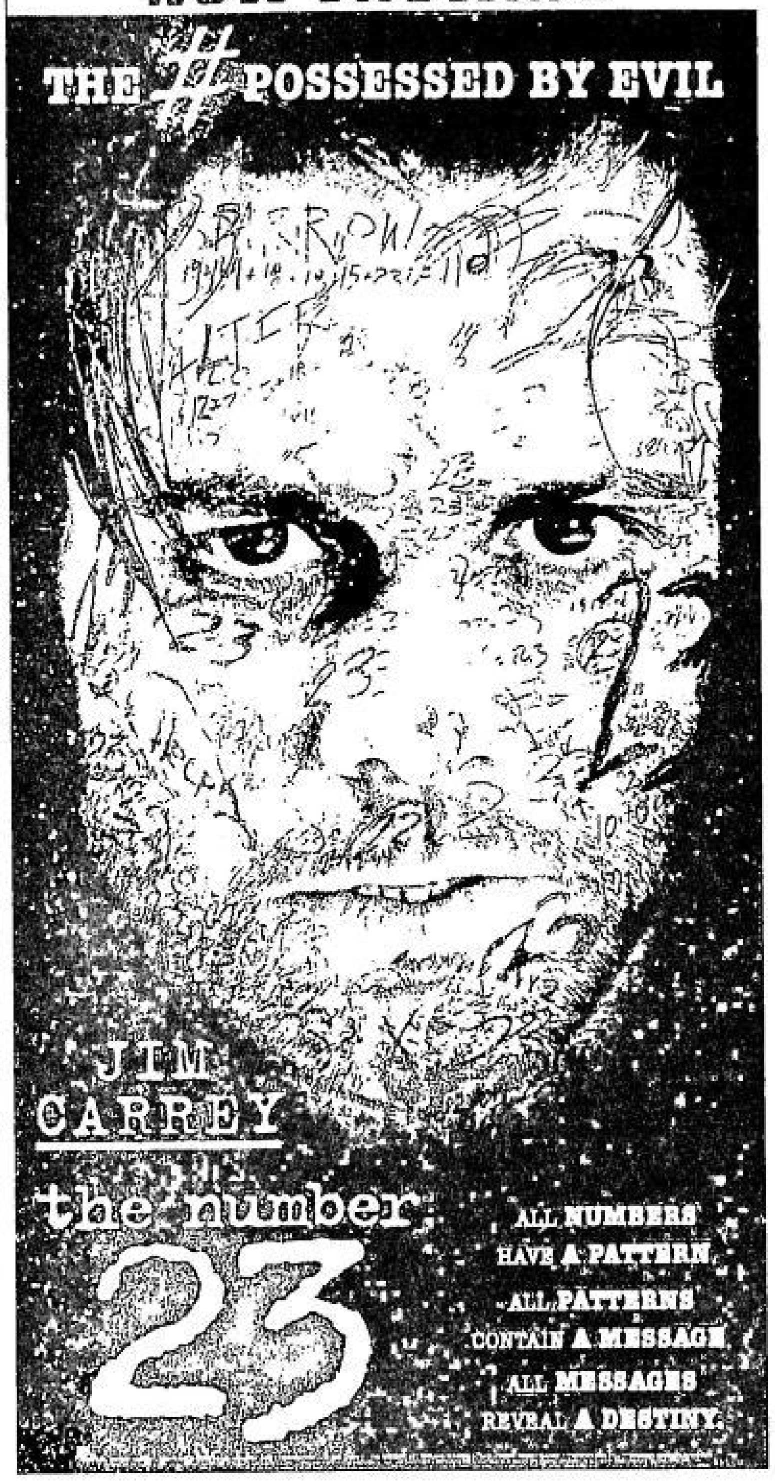
THE # POSSESSED BY EVIL
JIM CARREY
the number 23
ALL NUMBERS HAVE A PATTERN, ALL PATTERNS CONTAIN A MESSAGE ALL MESSAGES REVEAL A DESTINY.

SHANG CINEPLEX

① **FLUSHED AWAY**
MTRCB GP
1:05, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, 10:00

② **YOU GOT ME**
SUBJECT TO MTRCB RATING

③ **IT'S A BOY GIRL THING**
MTRCB PG-13

④ **PRIMEVAL**
MTRCB R-13
12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00

PREMIERE THEATRE | **MUSIC AND LYRICS**
MTRCB PG-13

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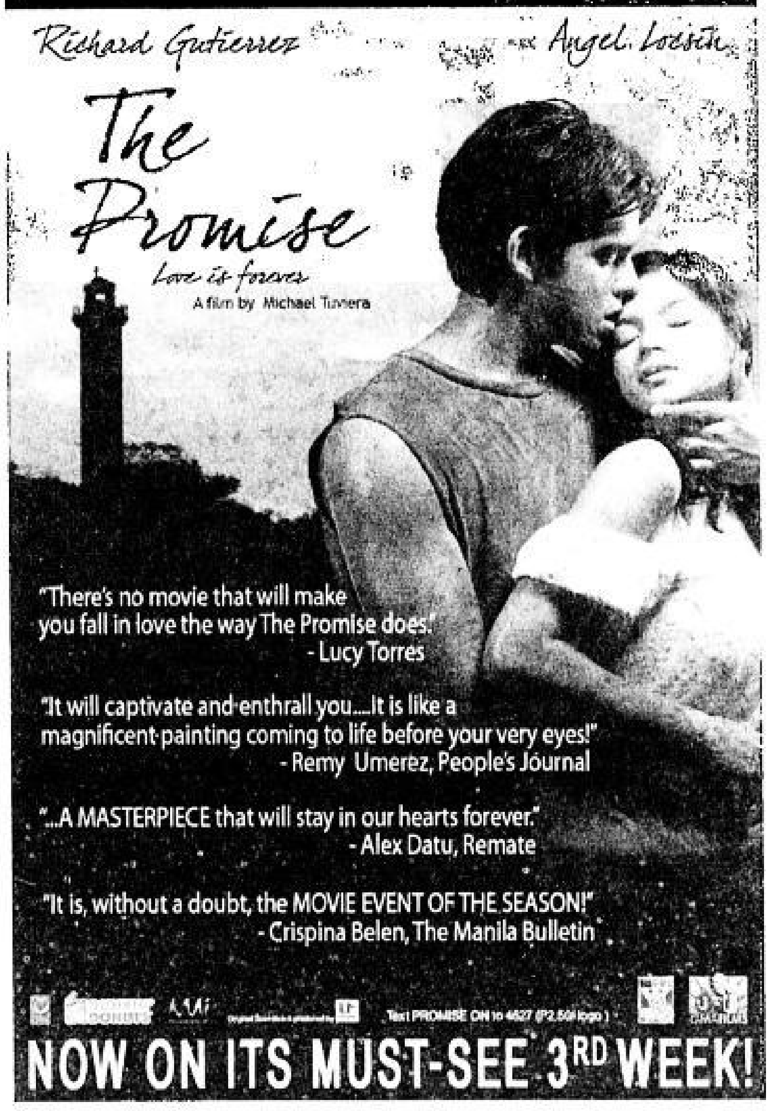

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YOU GOT ME	MUSIC AND LYRICS PG13	FLUSHED AWAY

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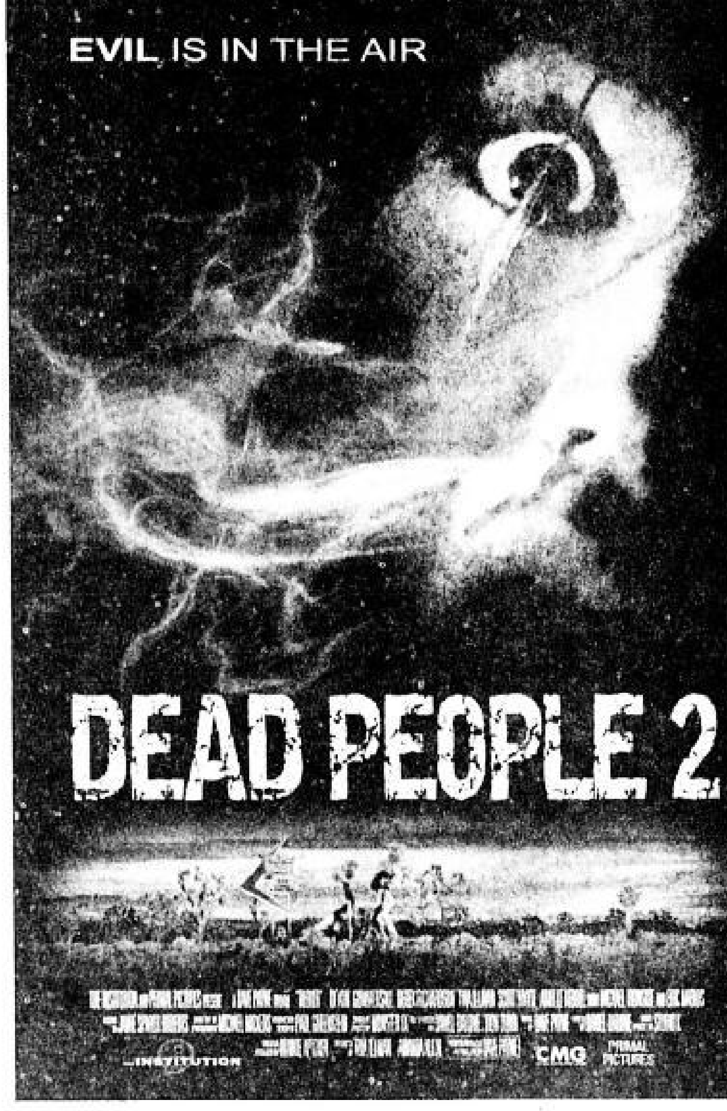
EVIL IS IN THE AIR
DEAD PEOPLE 2

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glorietta · GREENBELT · ALABANG TOWN · AYALA CENTER CEBU · MARKET! MARKET! · Ayala Malls

AT THE CINEMAS

Reserve your tickets by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 to 2333 (Globe) or 211 (Smart) or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.
Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification, please call 729 7777

THX

G1	1 NUMBER 23	2 GHOST RIDER	3 BRIDGE OF TERABITHIA	4 THE PROMISE
G4	1 EPIC MOVIE	2 MUSIC & LYRICS	3 THX GHOST RIDER GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 THE LAST KING OF SCOTLAND	5 BRIDGE OF TERABITHIA	6 THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS	7 NUMBER 23
GB1	1 EPIC MOVIE	2 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA		
GB3	1 THX NUMBER 23 GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 MUSIC & LYRICS GUARANTEED SEATS	4 THE LAST KING OF SCOTLAND GUARANTEED SEATS	5 EPIC MOVIE GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC	1 THX THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS GUARANTEED SEATS	2 GHOST RIDER		
	3 NUMBER 23	4 BRIDGE OF TERABITHIA	5 EPIC MOVIE	
ACC	1 GHOST RIDER	2 MUSIC & LYRICS	3 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER	4 BLOOD & CHOCOLATE
M2	1 THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS	2 BRIDGE OF TERABITHIA		
	3 NUMBER 23	4 EPIC MOVIE	5 GHOST RIDER	

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Greenbelt - 757 4853, from 11am to 9pm
Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; from 10am to 8pm
Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc 324
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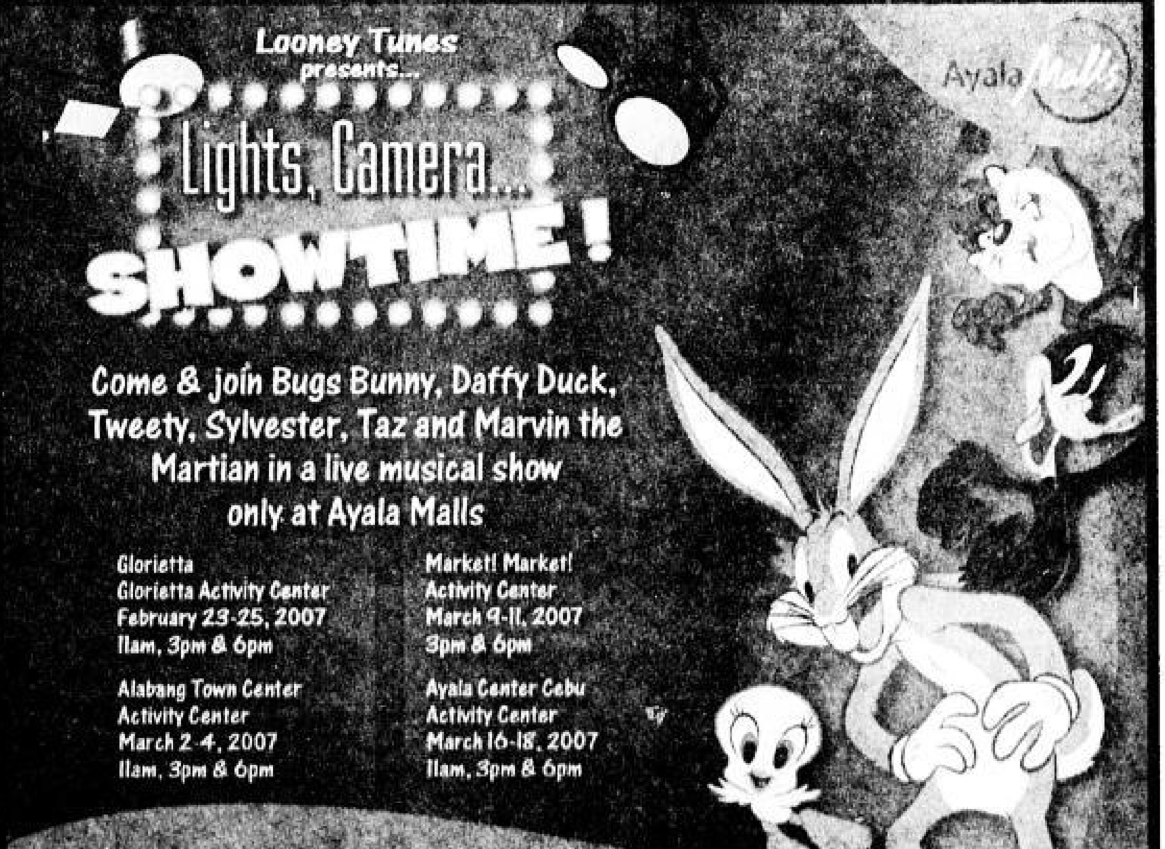
THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

MTRCB Rating: Restricted 18 (R-18)

glorietta · GREENBELT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3pm & 6pm

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Activity Center
March 2-4, 2007
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Ayala Center Cebu
Activity Center
March 16-18, 2007
11am, 3pm & 6pm

glorietta · ALABANG TOWN · AYALA CENTER CEBU · MARKET! MARKET!

REVIEW

Spook show

From page E2

wasted as an ordinary, tentative TV reporter-turned-damsel in distress. She's no Lois Lane, that's for sure; she just stays onscreen long enough to prettify the scenery.

Ghost Rider's arch-foes don't even put up much of a fight, so there aren't any memorable scenes of monster butt-kicking. It gets especially tedious when the character chats with a potential mentor, the Caretaker (Sam Elliott), the previous generation's horseback-riding Rider.

If only all Marvel projects were superior transitions like the "Spider-Man" and "X-Men" franchises! In "Ghost Rider" the real epic battle happens in your seat—where you struggle between consciousness and slumber.

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MOVIE GUIDE
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SHANG CINEPLEX

1 (DOLBY)	FLUSHED AWAY
2 (DOLBY)	YOU GOT ME
3 (DOLBY)	IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
4 (DOLBY)	PRIMEVAL

PREMIERE

(DOLBY)	MUSIC AND LYRICS

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216

1	GHOST RIDER
2	BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
3	YOU GOT ME
4	PRIMEVAL

starmall EDSA–SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150

3	PRIMEVAL
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX)	GHOST RIDER
5	RESRVED

metropolis star cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504286, 5433994

1	THE PROMISE
2	YOU GOT ME
3	GHOST RIDER
4	PRIMEVAL

THEATRES

1	YOU GOT ME
2	GHOST RIDER
3	MUSIC & LYRICS

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-6271

1	YOU GOT ME
2	GHOST RIDER
3	RESRVED
4	RESRVED

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (DTS)	BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
2 (SDDS)	GHOST RIDER
3 (DTS)	EPIC MOVIE
4 GOLD (DTS)	YOU GOT ME
5 GOLD (DOLBY)	IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
6 GOLD (SDDS)	PRIMEVAL
7 GOLD (DOLBY)	FLUSHED AWAY
8	YOU GOT ME
9	NUMBER 23
10	THE PROMISE

Blue Wave
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sta. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927

1 (DOLBY)	FLUSHED AWAY
2 (DOLBY)	PRIMEVAL
3 (DOLBY)	YOU GOT ME
4 (DOLBY)	RESERVED

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 7334228

1 (DOLBY)	PRIMEVAL
2	GHOST RIDER
3	YOU GOT ME
4	THE PROMISE
5	IT'S A BOY GIRL THING

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Mandaluyong
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1	THE MESSENGER
2	PLEASE CALL
3	
4	

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274

1	YOU GOT ME
2	PRIMEVAL
3	GHOST RIDER

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4440346)

1	PRIMEVAL
2	APOCALYPTO

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1	PRIMEVAL
2	THE FOUNTAIN
3	BLOOD CHOCOLATE
4	YOU GOT ME

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	THE MESSENGER
2	NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72

1 (DOLBY)	PRIMEVAL
2 (DOLBY)	FLUSHED AWAY
3 (DOLBY)	YOU GOT ME
4 (DOLBY)	IT'S A BOY THING

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Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	GHOST RIDER
2	YOU GOT ME
3	PRIMEVAL
4	

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146

1	RESERVED
2	RESERVED
3	RESERVED
4	RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1	THE PROMISE
2	YOU GOT ME
3	GHOST RIDER

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729

1	YOU GOT ME
2	BABEL
3 (DOLBY)	GHOST RIDER
4 (DTS)	APOCALYPTO

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320

1	GHOST RIDER
2	PRIMEVAL
3	YOU GOT ME

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736

1	GHOST RIDER
2	YOU GOT ME

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748

1	TROIKA
2	PLEASE CALL

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1	THE MESSENGER
2	BLOOD CHOCOLATE
3	PLEASE CALL
4	PLEASE CALL

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	YOU GOT ME
2	RED ROSES
3	THE PROMISE
4	TROIKA
5	THE PROMISE

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	CODENAME THE CLEANER
2	GHOST RIDER
3	TROIKA
4	YOU GOT ME

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

1	TROIKA
2	THE MESSENGER

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX
Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City
E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave. (C-5) Quezon City

To receive Eastwood City Events, Promos and Cinema schedule just text eastwood and send to 2948 for Globe, Smart & Sun Cellular subscribers

For inquiries, call:
687-6963
GUARANTEED SEATS
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

1	PRIMEVAL 1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 3:40, 11:00 R-13
2	FLUSHED AWAY 1:40, 4:45, 7:50, 10:55 G
3	YOU GOT ME
4	IT'S A BOY THING PG-13

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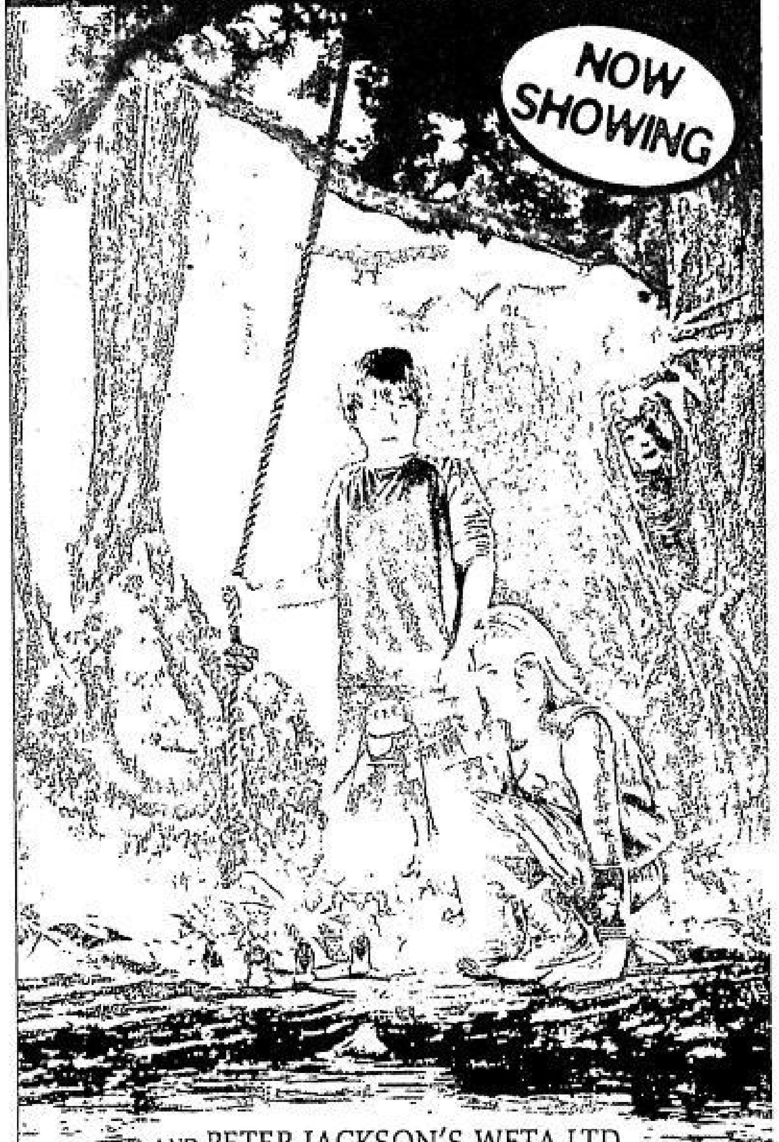

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PRIMEVAL 12:25 / 2:45 / 5:05 / 7:25 / 9:45	IT'S A BOY GIRL THING 1:00 / 3:10 / 5:20 / 7:30 / 9:40	YOU GOT ME	Globe PLATINUM CINEMA
FLUSHED AWAY 12:20 / 2:30 / 4:40 / 6:50 / 9:00	BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA 3:20 / 7:40	NUMBER 23 1:10 / 5:30 / 9:50	
EPIC MOVIE 1:40 / 3:40 / 5:40 / 7:40 / 9:40	GHOST RIDER 2:20 / 4:50 / 7:20 / 9:50	MUSIC & LYRICS 1:05 / 3:15 / 5:25 / 7:35 / 9:45	PRIMEVAL 2:10 / 4:30 / 6:50 / 9:10

ALIMALL 5

1	PRIMEVAL 1:15 / 3:35 / 5:55 / 8:15	2	IT'S A BOY GIRL THING 11:55 / 2:05 / 4:15 / 6:25 / 8:35	3	YOU GOT ME
4	THE PROMISE 12:00 / 2:05 / 4:10 / 6:15 / 8:20	5	GHOST RIDER 1:05 / 3:35 / 6:05 / 8:35		DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

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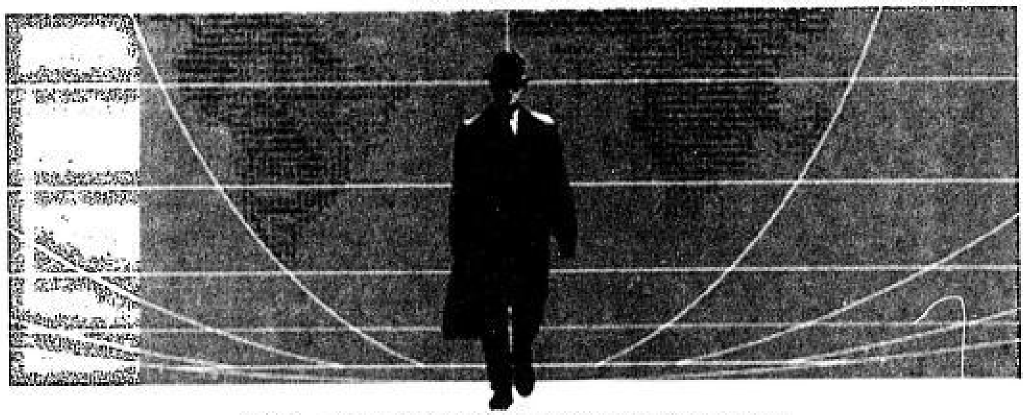
DAVID ANSEN NEWSWEEK



Release through Solar Entertainment Corporation
IN THEATERS MARCH 7

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We Know It's Big. We Measured.
EPIC MOVIE
NOW SHOWING

PHOTOS BY RUDY ESPERAS

DENNIS TRILLO

NIÑO MUHLACH

JAMES YAP

Repeat offender on a night-out

DOLLYWOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

JAMES YAP APOLOGIZED ON NATIONAL television to wife Kris Aquino for his reported indiscretion. The following night, he was spotted in a high-end girly bar with one of his basketball teammates. Maybe he just wanted to unburden himself. But will flirting with one of the club's sexy dancers (name starts with a C) solve his marital woes? What's the use of apologizing if you continue to be a repeat offender? What will it take for Kris to tame James? Can he ever be a true husband and answer the call of duty over and beyond the call of the wild?!

Happy dad

Niño Muhlach had mixed emotions when he met his 11-year-old love child for the first time. "I was so happy to see my daughter," he told me, "but also sad that I missed out on her formative years 'cause her mom and I had lost touch. I regret that her (the daughter's) name doesn't start with an A—which is a tradition in our clan, and that she's not using my family name. But when she turns 18, I'll leave it to her to decide."

Onin's son with wife Edith, Alissandro, is now 6. "I'd like my two kids to grow up close. Carbon copy *ko 'yung* daughter *ko! Di pwede ma*-deny *na akin* (laughs)! I'll definitely make up for that lost time with her." He knows the evil that men can do, so Onin says he'll give future suitors of his *unica hija* a hard time. The former child wonder is now Mr. Wonderful dad. How heartwarming!

Not ready

Dennis Trillo just laughs off talk pinpointing him as the dad of ex-GF/beauty queen Carlene Aguilar's rumored baby-to-be.

"Carlene and I still see each other but no longer in the romantic sense. I am now non-exclusively dating (laughs). I'm not ready for fatherhood. *Masarap pa maging binata!*" Ah, the thrills that Trillo brings to women of all persuasions!

First the baby news...

Funny, Tanya Garcia and Mark Lapid never officially announced that they're on. Now they're expecting their firstborn. "*Ayokong maging* subject *pa kami ng* blind items and speculations so I admitted it right away," says Mark. There are no concrete plans yet but, Mark says, "*Siyempre may kasal.* Our baby will be the third *apo* (the first two courtesy of Mark's two sisters), but the first to carry our surname." That is to say, they will MARK the day the next Lapid scion arrives!

Classic drama

A classic story updated for the times but true to its origins is ABS-CBN's lavish new *teleserye* "Maria Flordeluna," weeknights on Prime Time Bida. Based on the '70s hit radio soap in Cebu, it's also aired on dzMM. Flor and her brother Rene Boy are portrayed by brilliant child stars Eliza Pineda and Nash Aguas. It's for the drama queen in all of us!

New show

Solar Entertainment and RPN 9 present a dating game show done in "Meet the Parents" fashion. "Sabi ni Nanay" puts girl "searchees" on the hot grill and the guy searcher's mom in command. Hosted by funnyman Dennis Padilla and airs Fridays, 8:30 p.m. starting March 9, it emulates Pinoy courtship culture, showing that mothers-in-law really make the unwritten "laws" in a marriage.

New endorser

PBB teen sensation Kim Chui has been tapped as endorser of Ph Care Pure & Fresh (feminine wash for teens). The bedimpled charmer lives up to the product's name. "There are many temptations in show biz but I promise to stay pure—never will I be wild and *pasaway!*" I teased her "Not even when you're with Gerard (Anderson)?" She giggles "Behave *ako parati. Siya lang ang pilyo minsan.*" Kim is proof that good girls in the biz are not necessarily a dying breed.

E-mail wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com

Lessons learned from 'Apocalypto'

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

AFTER VIEWING MEL GIBSON'S "APOCALYPTO," we found ourselves mulling over, not just the movie, but also the lessons it could teach our local film people.

First, we noted that the movie had no star value to speak of. Even the lead roles were played by gifted actors with no drawing power, so the film attracted viewers mainly with Gibson's name, and its filmic plus points.

Next we noted that the movie's locations could all have been found or built in the Philippines. Our point is not that Gibson should have shot the movie here, but that our own producers, if so inclined, could also come up with a similar production for international release.

In the past, we used to be told by experienced film people that, to make it globally, a movie should have at least one principal actor who was American or British. It would also help if that lead actor had a fairly recognizable name.

He didn't have to be a big star, but *some* name recall would certainly be welcome, so that the film project could acquire a measure of clout and commercial significance abroad.

Well, Gibson's latest film has proven that this is no longer a make-or-break requirement. True, the movie isn't a big hit, but people are still viewing it, and some reviewers even hail it as one of the best movies of 2006.

Again, it's true that the Gibson connection cannot be gainsaid when it comes to clout and recall. And Gibson had multi-millions of dollars at his disposal. The money he saved by not having to pay millions to his lead players was instead plowed into the film's big scenes and cast of hundreds.

But the point remains valid: A film like "Apocalypto" is very much a possibility for local movie people to produce for international release.

A key consideration goes beyond such a project's exoticism, and requires the film to contain elements that viewers everywhere can relate to.

In the case of "Apocalypto," those empathetic elements include love for family, inspiring heroism, and a "small" man overcoming his fears to become great in the end.

The elements would enable the film to communicate beyond the limits of language and borders. Can our movie people take their cue from "Apocalypto" and come up with such a universally inspiring and accessible film?

Romanian violinist

Acclaimed Romanian violinist Alexandru Tomescu pays tribute to Filipino violin greats on March 1, 6:30 p.m. at the Governor's Hall, provincial Capitol, Bacolod City.

Silent Sanctuary

The Silent Sanctuary band has released its new album, "Fuchsiang Pag-ibig," with songs about love led by its carrier single, "Ikaw Lamang." Silent Sanctuary is Anjo Inacay on cello, Chino David on violin, Allen Calixto on drums, Paolo Legaspi on bass and Sarkie Sarangay on guitar and lead vocals.

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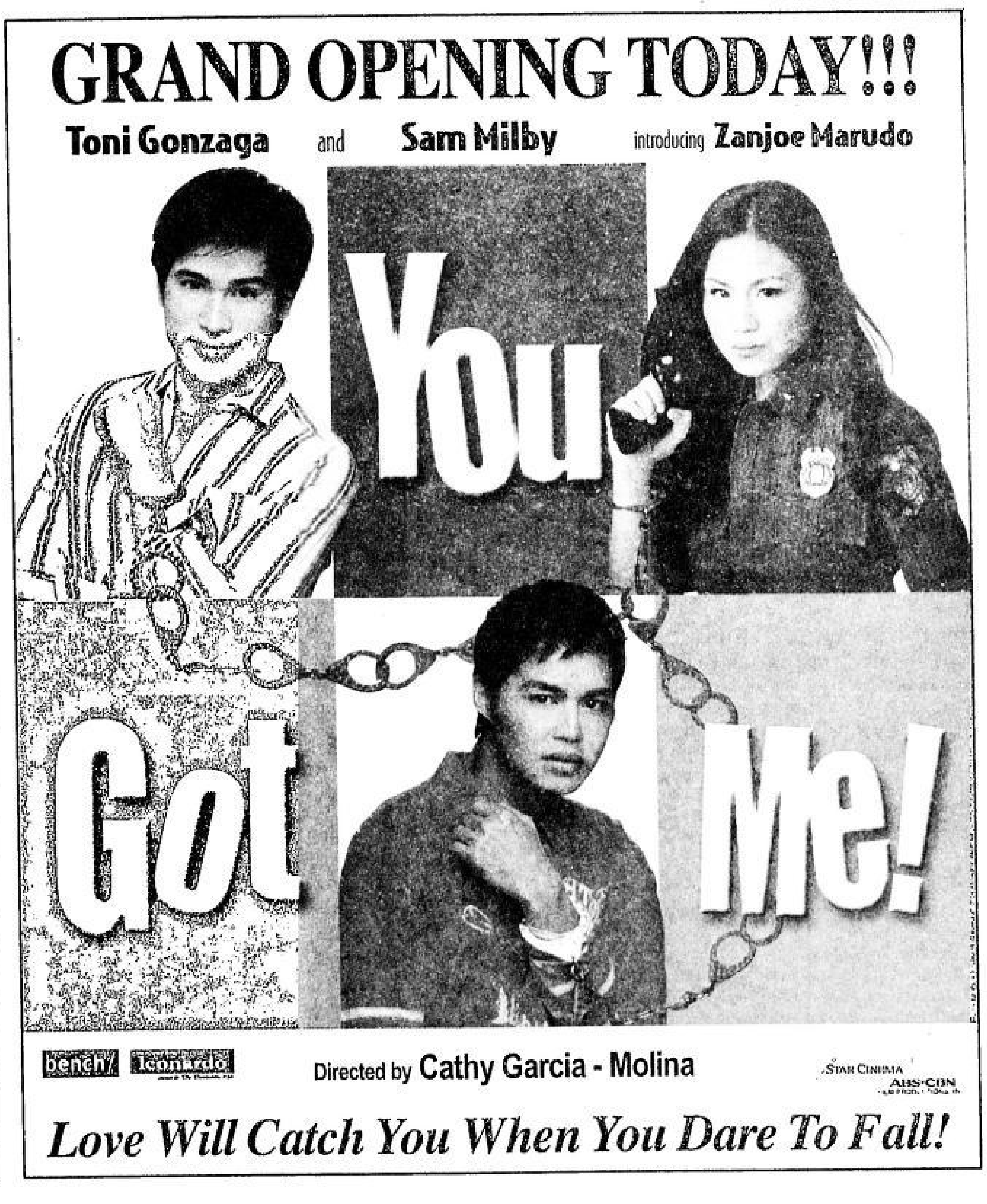
GRAND OPENING TODAY!!!
Toni Gonzaga and Sam Milby introducing Zanjoe Marudo
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OPENING TODAY

Pepot Artista

Stars Elijah Castillo, Rio Locsin, Cris Villanueva, Jeffrey Quizon, Bituin Escalante

Directed by Clodualdo del Mundo Jr.

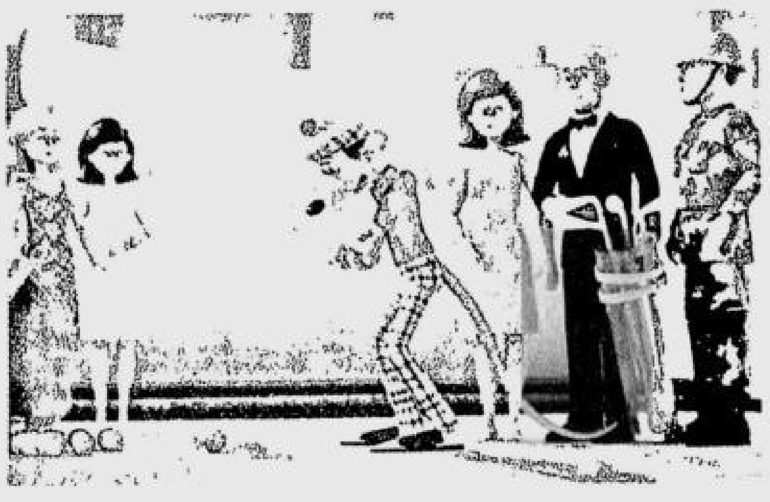
A homely kid (Castillo) dreams of joining show biz, against all odds. Along the way, he meets some colorful characters that teach him a lesson or two about life. The Best Picture winner at the first Cinemalaya Film Festival in 2005, the directorial debut of screenwriter Del Mundo also won Best Actor for Castillo at the Singapore International Film Festival in 2006. Nestor U. Torre of the INQUIRER commends Castillo: "He held the movie together with his natural and engaging characterization. He infused the role with an affecting honesty and charm." Exclusively at IndieSine, Robinsons Galleria.

You Got Me

Stars Toni Gonzaga, Sam Milby, Zanjoe Marudo

Directed by Cathy Garcia-Molina

The previous collaboration between director Molina and the Toni-Sam tandem resulted in "You Are the One," which hit the P100-million mark. "I grew up as an actor under the guidance of Direk Cathy," says Sam. "She motivates actors very well," agrees Toni. The trio reunites, and joining them is PBB celeb-housemate Zanjoe. This unlikely ménage à trois casts Toni and Sam as cops and Zanjoe as a vendor of pirated DVDs. "Direk Cathy was very patient with me," Zanjoe admits. "Love Day is extended with this movie," Toni insists. "It's our Valentine's gift to our fans," Sam adds.



Flushed Away

With the voices of Hugh Jackman, Kate Winslet, Ian McKellen

Directed by David Bowers

After a high-class pet mouse (Jackman) is flushed down the toilet, he attempts to save his fellow rats' bustling sewer world from an evil toad (McKellen) and his henchmen. David Ansen of Newsweek thinks it's "very English in its mix of potty humor and literate wit and very Hollywood in its action-packed pace ... impressive." Josh Bell of Las Vegas Weekly opines that it's "charming and often quite funny, with lots of amusing background details." Ty Burr of Boston Globe disagrees: "The story line is 'Stuart Little' meets 'Toy Story' on the way to 'Madagascar.'"

Primeval

Stars Dominic Purcell, Orlando Jones, Brooke Langton

Directed by Michael Katleman

A team of journalists travel to an African country searching for a mythical giant reptile. Dennis Harvey of Variety points out that this thriller deserves some credit for "imagination, or at least perversity. It's a giant crocodile 'Jaws' crossed with fact-inspired 'Blood Diamond.'" Peter Hartlaub of San Francisco Chronicle says: "For some insane reason, the filmmakers attempted to create a film that blends 'Anaconda' and 'Hotel Rwanda.'" Frank Scheck of The Hollywood Reporter describes it as "a low-rent monster movie [that] boasts a [high] level of cheesiness."

The Hitcher

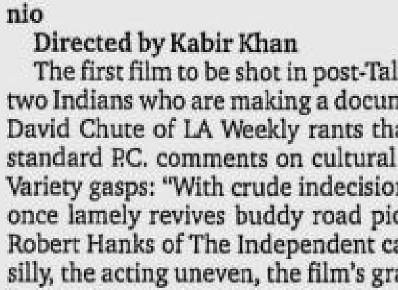
Stars Sean Bean, Sophia Bush, Zachary Knighton, Neal McDonough

Directed by Dave Meyers

A remake of a 1986 slasher flick of the same title, this screamfest follows a lovely young couple (Bush and Knighton) on the road as they are stalked by a psychotic killer (Bean). Matt Zoller Seitz of New York Times states that this film "isn't shy about declaring its intentions. [Its] message: Roadkill comes in all shapes and sizes." Mark Olsen of Los Angeles Times asserts that the "[original] was intellectually engaging as well as tangibly creepy, [but] the remake is just plain bad, and boring to boot." Jim Ridley of LA Weekly raves: "If the idea is to create a reactionary fable of unmitigated evil laughing in the face of dithering appeasement, mission accomplished."

It's a Boy Girl Thing

Stars Kevin Zegers, Samaire Armstrong, Sharon Osbourne



Directed by Nick Hurran

Hilarity ensues when the campus heartthrob (Zegers) switches bodies with the school nerd (Armstrong). Mayhem erupts as they attempt to destroy each other's reputations. Genevieve Harrison of Empire Magazine insists that "the body-swap sub-genre gets a new twist ... with good performances and a sizzling script." Matthew Turner of ViewLondon.co.uk agrees: "The most interesting thing about the film is how close it comes to doing something genuinely different." Rich Cline of Shadows on the Wall concurs: "This lively and energetic comedy is thoroughly watchable."

Kabul Express

Stars John Abraham, Arshad Warsi, Salman Shahid, Linda Arsenio

Directed by Kabir Khan

The first film to be shot in post-Taliban Afghanistan tells the story of two Indians who are making a documentary on the strife-torn country. David Chute of LA Weekly rants that "the story is confined to some standard P.C. comments on cultural stereotyping." Robert Koehler of Variety gasps: "With crude indecision and larky silliness, [this film] at once lamely revives buddy road pics and trivializes global politics." Robert Hanks of The Independent calls it "a peculiarity ... the story is silly, the acting uneven, the film's grasp of reality tenuous." Exclusively at Robinsons Movieworld Galleria.

DOLPHY: "Happy to be alive."

ELIZABETH POE

PRESENTERS German Moreno and Lani Mercado

Ani Awards night

Mowelfund honors stars who served RP movies well

SEN. JINGGOY Estrada and Phillip Salvador

By Nini Valera

ONLY DOLPHY SHOWED UP FRIDAY NIGHT at the Aliw Theater to receive his Ani Award. This prompted the comedian to say he was scared, since all the recipients, except for former President Joseph Estrada, had passed away.

"We're all headed there (death), but I'm happy to be still alive and receiving this," said Dolphy. "Those who have served the industry well deserve an Ani Award, like the man standing behind me."

He was referring to Eddie Garcia, who presented him with the trophy. It was the night of the first Ani Awards, lifetime achievement honors handed out by the Movie Workers Welfare Foundation Inc. (Mowelfund) to members of the movie industry for their contribution to local films.

Birth of Mowelfund

Dolphy has helped many indigent movie workers with medical and other financial expenses. He recounted: "One time, FPJ, Erap and I thought of organizing an agency that would take care of these needs."

In August 1974, Erap founded the Mowelfund. This earned him one of the first Ani Awards on Friday. Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, the former president's son, said Erap, who is detained in his rest house in Tanay, was very happy and excited about the award.

In a taped message, Erap encouraged industry workers to continue to improve their craft and help the needy among them.

Ani Awards were also given posthumously to Don Jose Nepomuceno, Honorata "Atang" de la Rama, Rogelio de la Rosa and Carmen Rosales, Rosa del Rosario and Fernando Poe Jr.

Known as the Father of Philippine Movies, Nepomuceno produced the country's first feature film in 1917, the silent movie "Dalagang Bukid," starring the then 15-year-old De la Rama. Nepomuceno was also the movie's screenwriter, director and cinematographer, art director, editor and lab man. He distributed it through Malayan Movies.

World bowling champion Paeng Nepomuceno received the award for his grandfather.

Arlita Samoy received the trophy for her grandmother, Atang de La Rama, *zarzuela* superstar and first Filipino film actress.

Delivering an impassioned speech in Filipino, Samoy said, "If Ka Atang were alive, I am sure she would want you to hear this message: 'We have one song, a song about freedom and justice, of love for country ... I served Filipino culture with my whole heart and made music that echoed our nationalism. Now, I pose this challenge: Will we sing for our country or for foreigners? Will we sing for ourselves or the masses? Will we sing about progress or stagnation?"

Alfie and Carlota Angara, grandchildren of Rogelio de la Rosa—the first Filipino matinee idol and movie star who held high government posts—regaled the audience with anecdotes about their grandfather.

Said Carlota: "Lolo [said his life was] composed of many accidents. He became an actor because of his brother-in-law, the late President Diosdado Macapagal, who wanted to be a *zarzuela* writer. Lolo joined politics [following] the advice ... of his good friend and idol, the late President Ramon Magsaysay. [He served] as senator until 1963 and [then as] ambassador to Cambodia, Holland and Sri Lanka until 1983. He told us that ... if he had to do it all over again, he would not change a moment of his time with you."

Emotional moments

Reny Navales could barely hold back his tears when he received the award for his mother, Carmen Rosales. "They were singing her songs," Navales said, referring to the love songs performed by Cesar Montano and Sunshine Cruz as a tribute to the love team of De la Rosa and Rosales.

Boots Anson-Roa, executive director of Mowelfund, received the award for Rosa del Rosario, who died in the US last year.

Del Rosario is best remembered for being the first Darna onscreen. She has also appeared in the Hollywood movies "Anna and the King" and "Border Bandit" during the war, when she was based in the US.

Another emotional moment was the awarding of the Ani to the late Fernando Poe Jr. "He remains in everyone's heart," said Poe's sister, Elizabeth. Poe's widow, Susan Roces, failed to attend because of a prior engagement, according to Anson-Roa.

The program will be aired March 17 on ABC 5.

MEMORABLE Oscar moments. Clockwise from above: Great-hair day for Beyonce and Gwyneth Paltrow; Tom Cruise and wife Katie Holmes still a paparazzi treat; Anne Hathaway shows off sparklers; Anika Noni Rose's $500,000 diamond-studded slippers; and what's with Jennifer Hudson's gown that men—including Forest Whitaker—keep adjusting it? REUTERS, AFP

Job well done

From page E1

NICOLE Kidman takes a red-carpet pause with Abigail Breslin. AFP

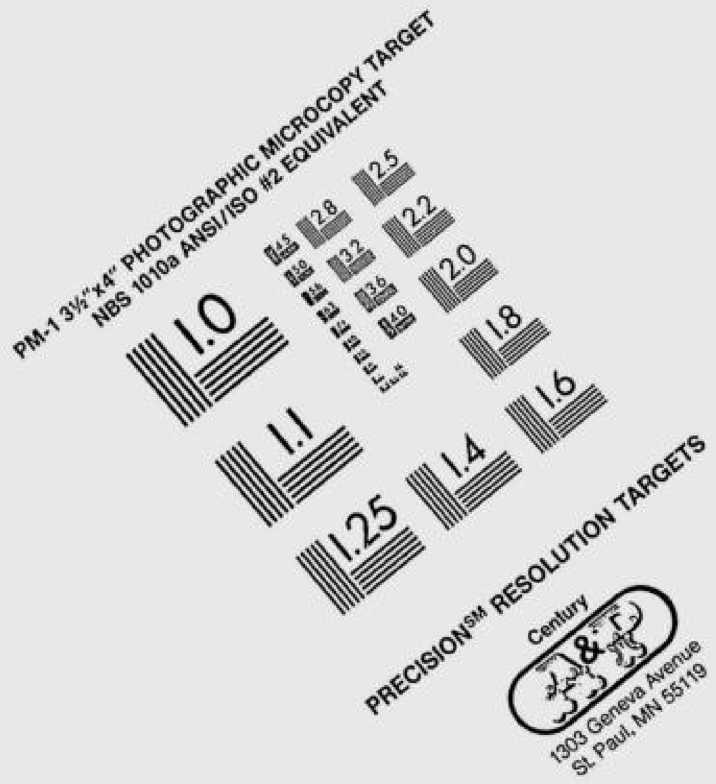
The 12-member modern-dance troupe Pilobolus was delightful in cameo appearances, seen in silhouette magically forming appropriate shapes—like the Oscar statuette, the van in "Little Miss Sunshine," and, even, snakes on a plane.

Humor doses

During the evening, DeGeneres made humorous passes through the hall to speak to some of the luminaries, including Martin Scorsese (to whom she gave a script she described as a cross between "Goodfellas" and "Big Momma's House") and Clint Eastwood (with whom she posed in a snapshot taken by Steven Spielberg, for her to post, she said, on her MySpace social networking page).

The Oscarcast almost ground to a halt during a back-and-forth session when film composer Ennio Morricone received a lifetime achievement Oscar and delivered his remarks in Italian, which presenter Clint Eastwood dutifully translated. It ate up three full minutes—it seemed so much longer.

One suggestion for making the Oscarcast seem livelier in the future: Use subtitles. *AP*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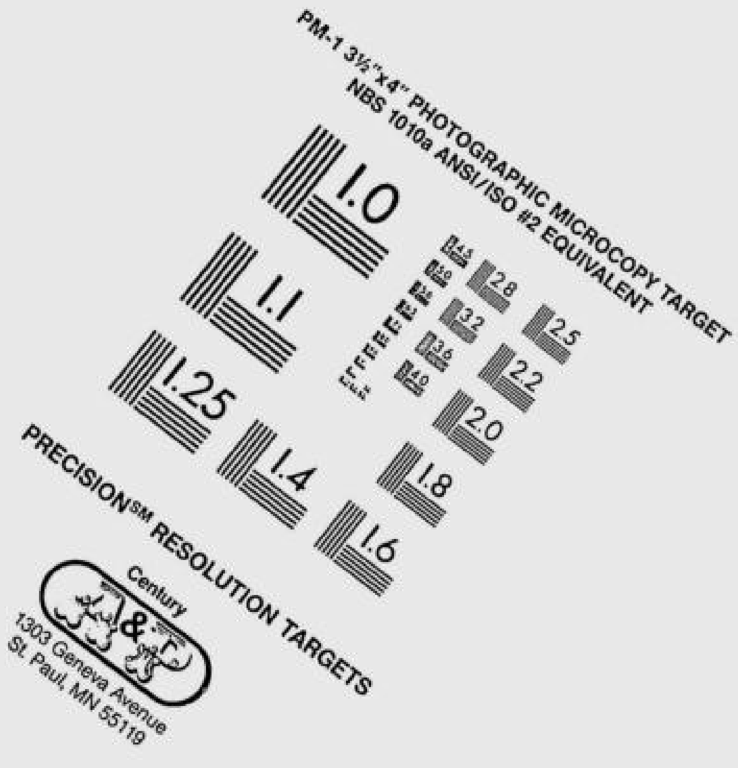
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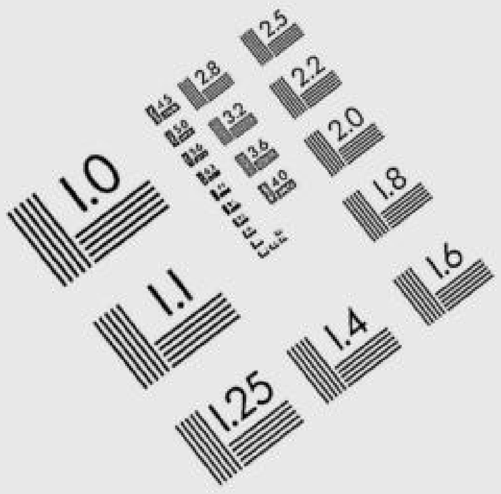
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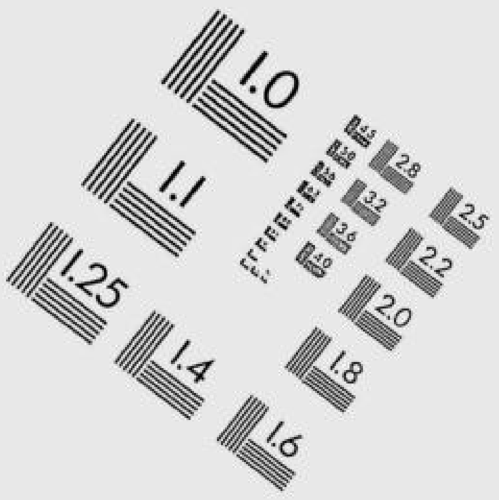
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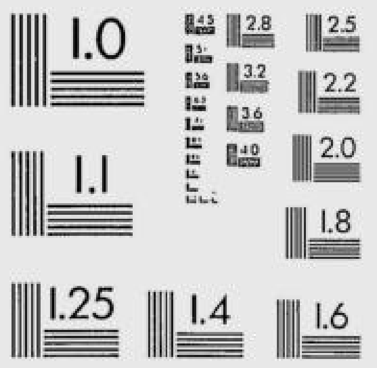
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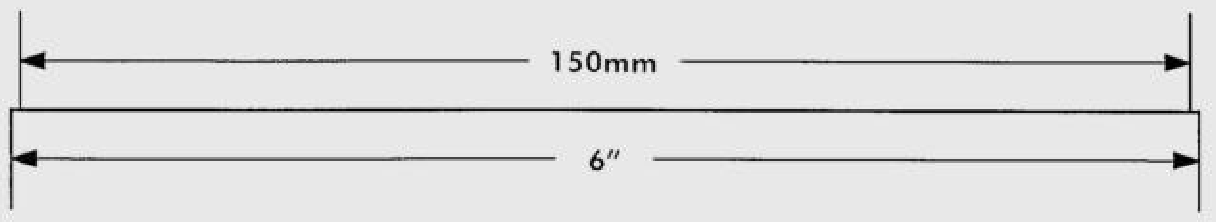

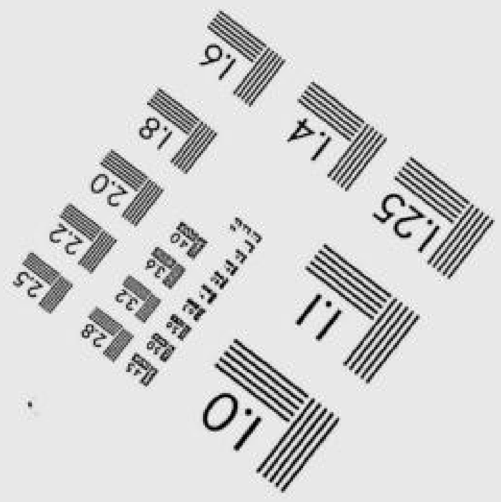
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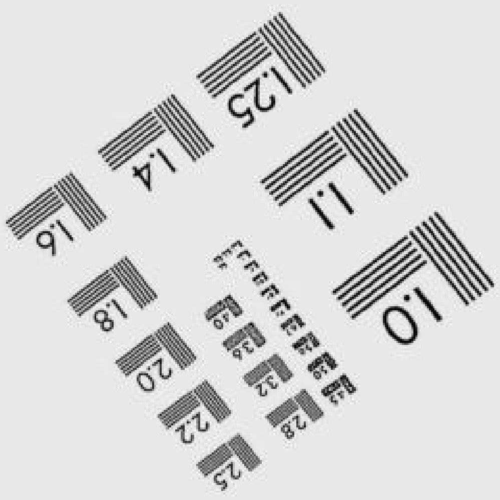
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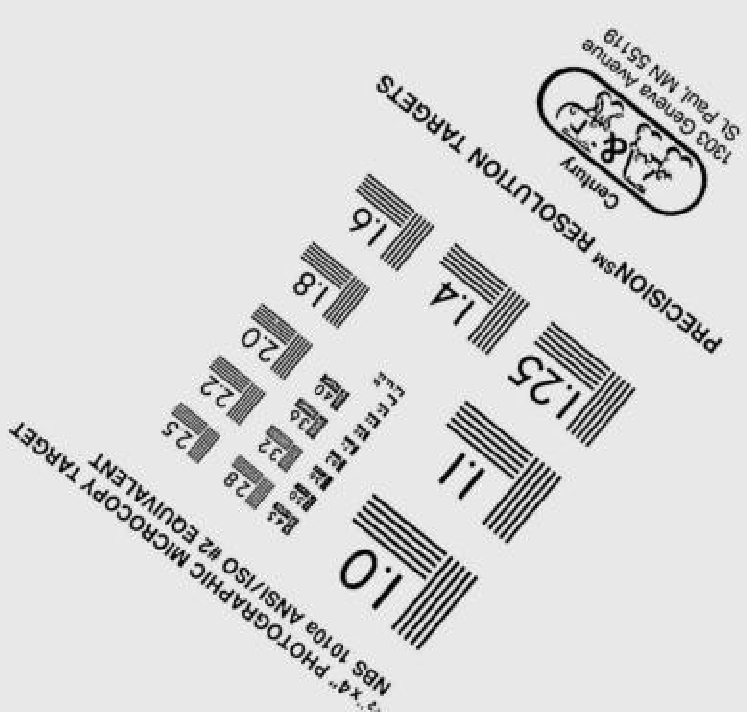
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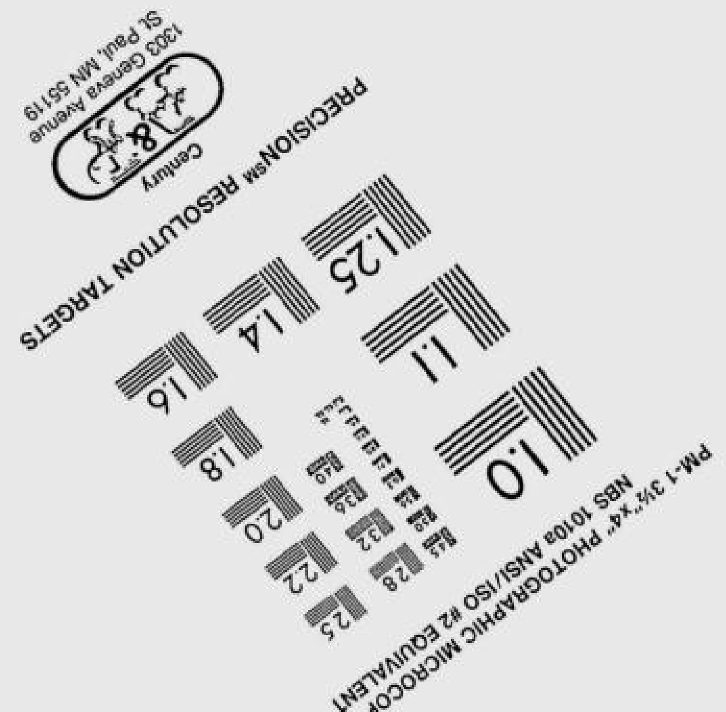
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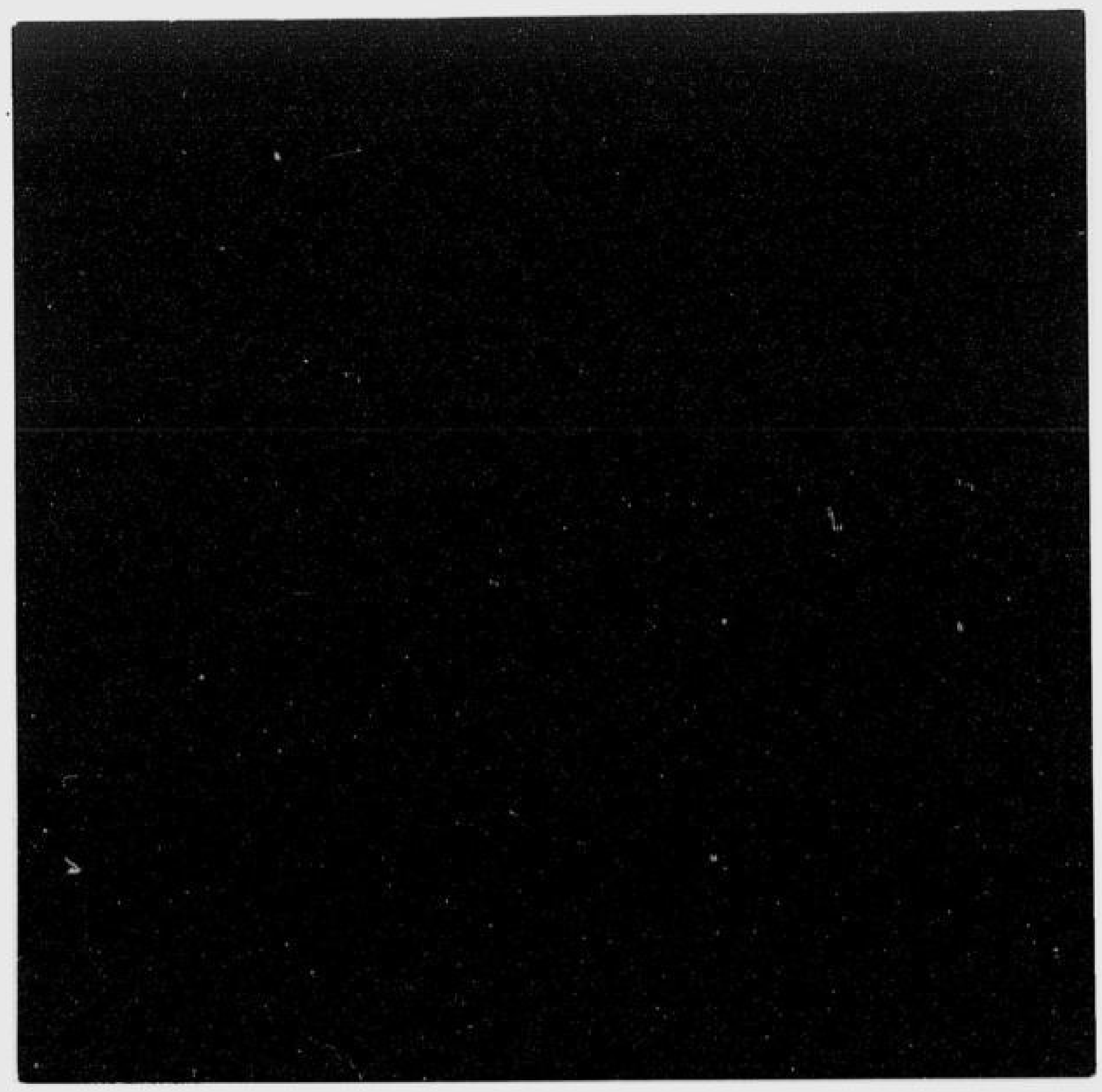

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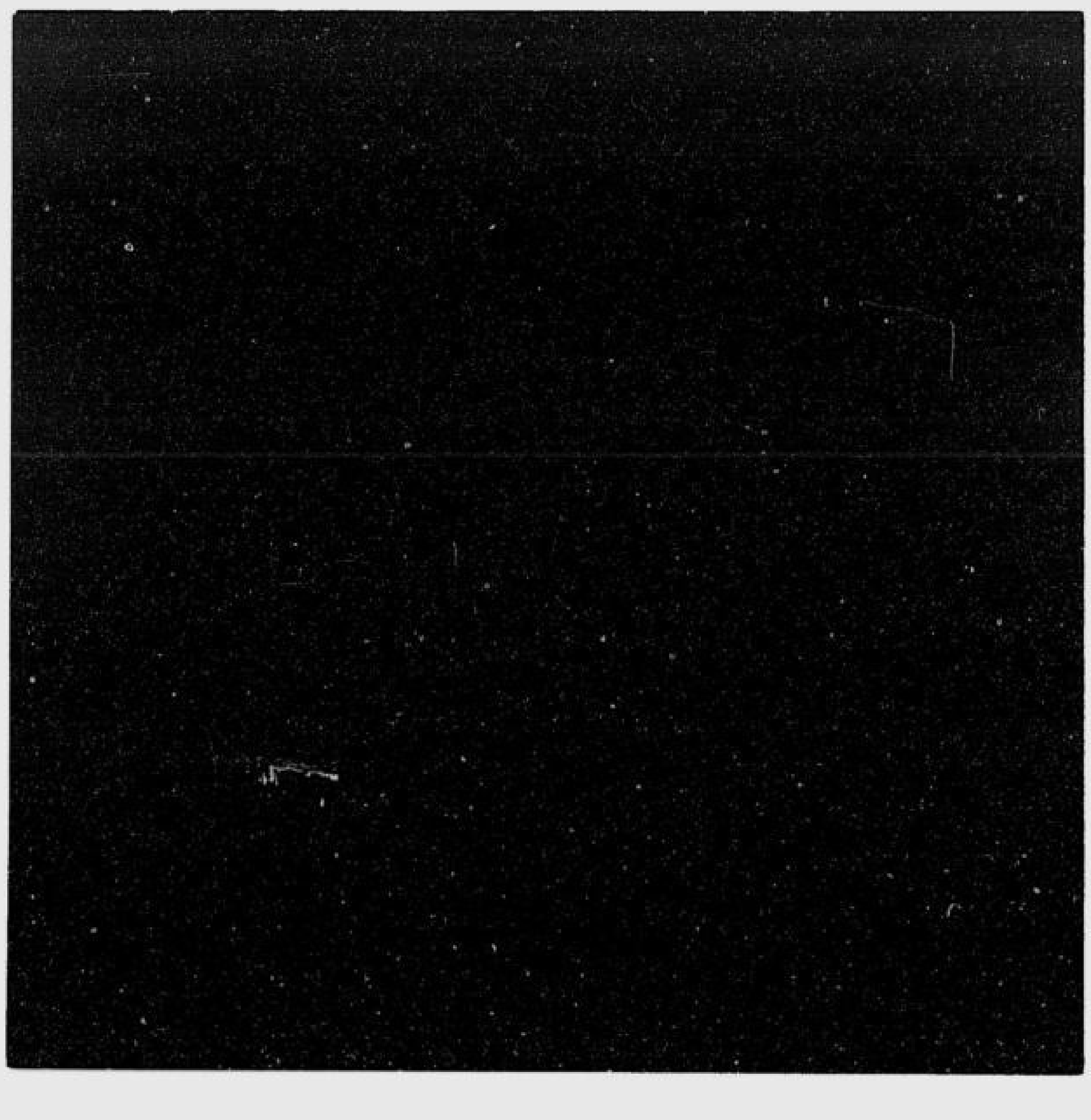

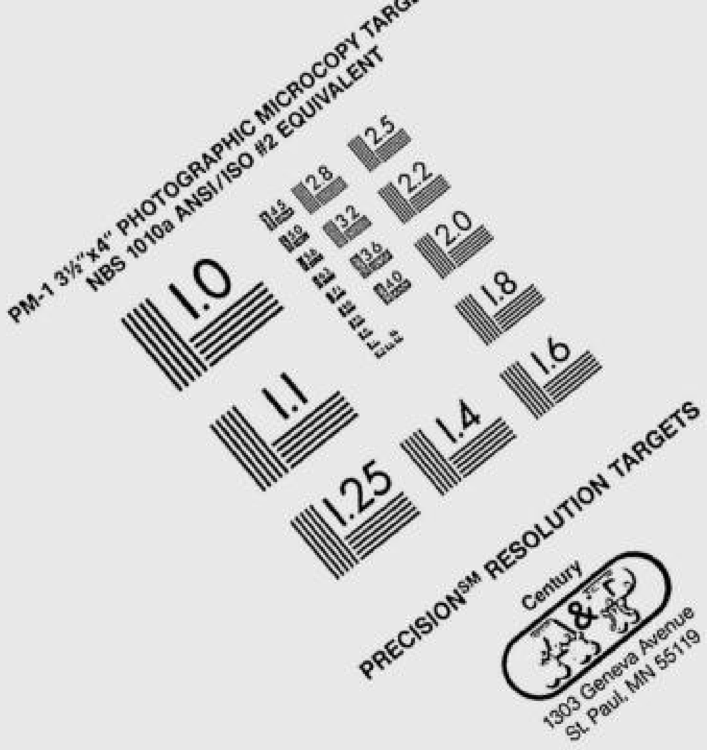
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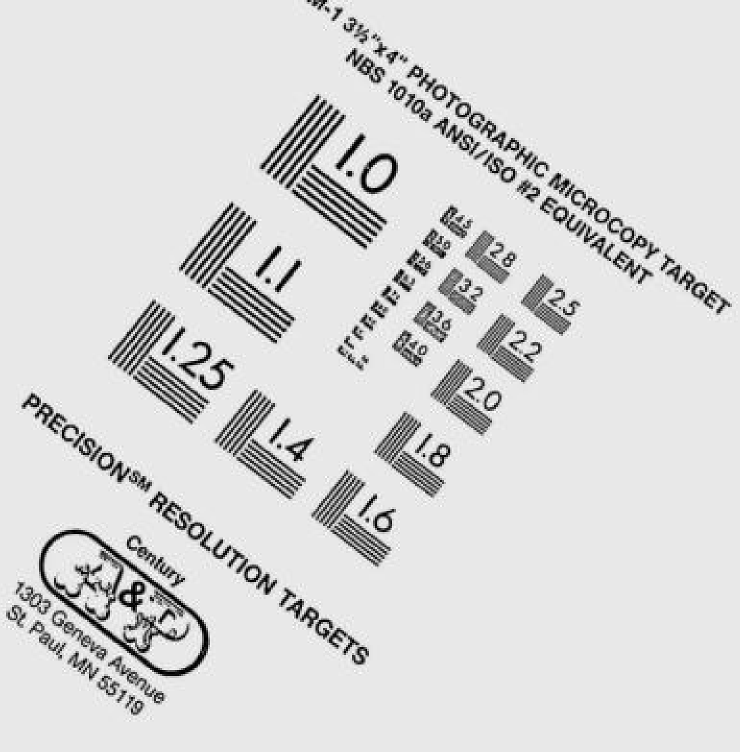
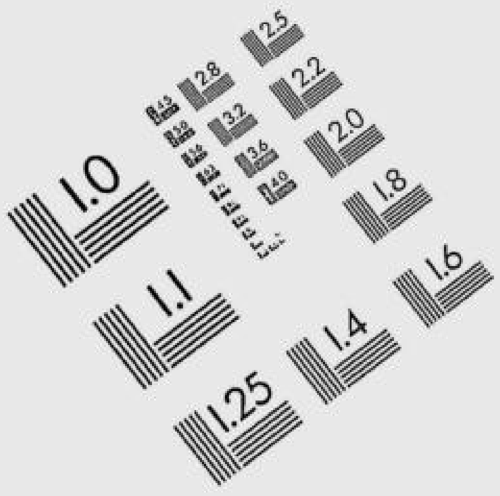
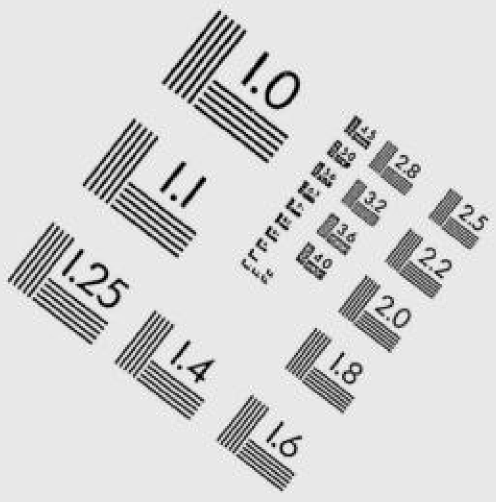
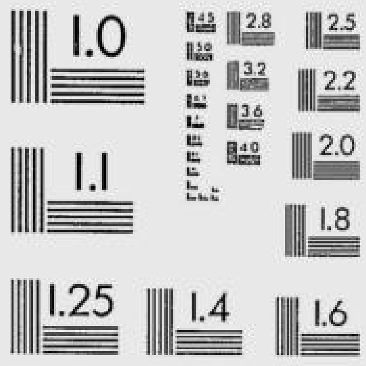

PM-1 3½"x4" PHOTOGRAPHIC MICROCOPY TARGET
NBS 1010a ANSI/ISO #2 EQUIVALENT
PRECISION℠ RESOLUTION TARGETS
Century
1303 Geneva Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55119

IMAGE EVALUATION
TEST TARGET (MT-3)



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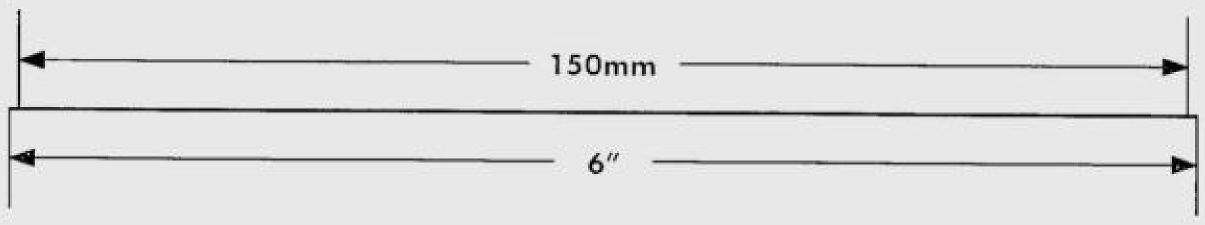
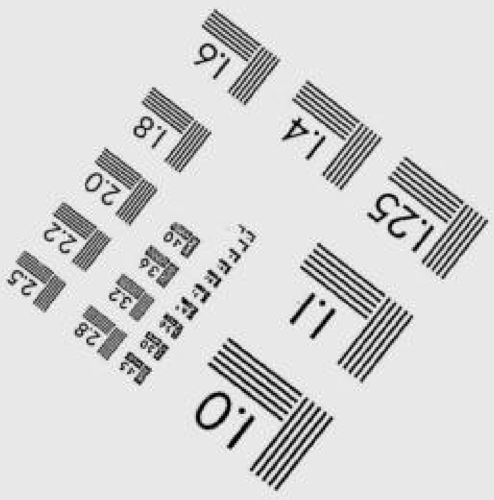
1.1
1.25
1.4
1.6
1.8
2.0
2.2
2.5
2.8
3.2
3.6
4.0
4.5
5.0
5.6





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